PLATO

Theaetetus

Translated by

FRANCIS MacDONALD CORNFORD

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PLATO'S THEAETETUS

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Translated, with a running commentary, by

FRANCIS MACDONALD CORNFORD

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NOTE ON THE TEXT

The present edition is an unabridged reprint of Part One of Francis M. Cornford's *Plato's Theory of Knowledge*, which contains the translation, together with the author's running commentaries, of both the *Theaetetus* and the *Sophist*. Originally published by Routledge & Kegan Paul, Ltd., London, *Plato's Theory of Knowledge* is also available in this series (LLA 100).

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PREFACE

WHEN the Editor, some eleven years ago, invited me to contribute to this series, I offered a translation of the *Theaetetus* with a running commentary. I have since added the *Sophist*. Meanwhile the book has been announced under the title, *Plato's Theory of Knowledge*, which may seem to promise more than I have performed. My object was to make accessible to students of philosophy who cannot easily read the Greek text, two masterpieces of Plato's later period, concerned with questions that still hold a living interest. A study of existing translations and editions has encouraged also the hope that scholars already familiar with the dialogues may find a fresh interpretation not unwelcome. A commentary has been added because, in the more difficult places, a bare translation is almost certain, if understood at all, to be misunderstood.

This danger may be illustrated by a quotation from a living philosopher of the first rank:

> 'It was Plato in his later mood who put forward the suggestion "and I hold that the definition of being is simply power". This suggestion is the charter of the doctrine of Immanent Law.'[1]

Dr. Whitehead is quoting Jowett's translation. If the reader will refer to the passage (p. 234 below), he will see that the words are rendered: 'I am proposing as a mark to distinguish real things that they are nothing but power.'[2] A mark of real things may not be a 'definition of being'. This mark, moreover, is offered by the Eleatic Stranger to the materialist as an improvement on his own mark of real things, tangibility. The materialist accepts it, 'having for the moment no better suggestion of his own to offer'. The Stranger adds that Theaetetus and he may perhaps change their minds on this matter later on. Plato has certainly not committed himself here to a 'definition of being'. So much could be dis-

[1] A. N. Whitehead, *Adventures of Ideas* (1933), p. 165. I am not suggesting that Dr. Whitehead fundamentally misunderstands the master who has deeply influenced his own philosophy, but only pointing out how a profound thinker may be misled by a translation.

[2] This rendering is itself doubtful, the construction of the words, as they stand in the MSS, being obscure and difficult.

covered from an accurate translation; but the word 'power' still needs to be explained. It has been rendered by 'potency', 'force', '*Möglichkeit*', '*puissance de relation*'. Without some account of the history of the word *dynamis* in Plato's time and earlier, the student accustomed to the terms of modern philosophy may well carry away a false impression.

To meet difficulties such as this, I have interpolated, after each compact section of the text, a commentary which aims at discovering what Plato really means and how that part of the argument is related to the rest. There are objections to dissecting the living body of a Platonic dialogue. No other writer has approached Plato's skill in concealing a rigid and intricate structure of reasoning beneath the flowing lines of a conversation in which the suggestion of each thought as it arises seems to be followed to an unpremeditated conclusion. In these later dialogues, however, the bones show more clearly through the skin; and it is likely that Plato would rather have us penetrate his meaning than stand back with folded hands to admire his art. An interpolated commentary, giving the reader the information he needs when and where he needs it, may be preferred to the usual plan of stowing away such information in an introduction at the beginning and notes at the end. It is not clear why we should be forced to read a book in three places at once. This book, at any rate, is designed to be read straight through.

The translation follows Burnet's text, except where I have given reasons for departing from it or proposed corrections of passages that are probably or certainly corrupt. I have tried to follow Plato's own practice of keeping to the current language of educated conversation and refusing to allow any word to harden into a technical term. The commentary attempts only to interpret Plato from his own writings and those of his forerunners and contemporaries, and accordingly avoids, so far as possible, the misleading jargon of modern philosophy. Terms like 'subjectivism', 'relativism', 'sensationalism', even when defined, often mask ambiguities of thought that are lost sight of as this token currency passes from hand to hand.

At the risk of appearing arrogant or ill-informed, I have, for the most part, ignored interpretations which I cannot accept. Also I have not loaded the notes with acknowledgments of my debts to other scholars. Among works which have most helped me I would mention Campbell's editions; Apelt's translations (which contain full bibliographies); M. Diès' editions in the *Collection des Universités de France*; E. Stölzel, *Die Behandlung des Erkenntnisproblems bei Platon* (Halle, 1908); J. Stenzel, *Entwicklung*

der platonischen Dialektik (Breslau, 1917); C. Ritter, *Neue Untersuchungen über Platon* (München, 1910); V. Brochard, *Études de philosophie ancienne* (Paris, 1912); and the well-known writings of John Burnet and Professor A. E. Taylor.

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1934

F. M. C.

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PLATO'S THEAETETUS

INTRODUCTION

SINCE the commentary aims at furnishing the reader with information as the need arises, it will be enough, by way of introduction, to indicate the place of the *Theaetetus* and the *Sophist* in the series of Plato's dialogues, and to define briefly the position from which the inquiry starts.

Our two dialogues belong to a group consisting of the *Parmenides*, the *Theaetetus*, the *Sophist*, and the *Statesman*. As M. Diès has observed,[1] Plato leaves no doubt that the dialogues are meant to be read in this order. The *Parmenides* describes a meeting imagined as taking place about 450 B.C. between Socrates, who would then be about twenty, and the Eleatic philosophers, Parmenides and Zeno. To suppose that anything remotely resembling the conversation in this dialogue could have occurred at that date would make nonsense of the whole history of philosophy in the fifth and fourth centuries; and I believe, with M. Diès, that the meeting itself is a literary fiction, not a fact in the biography of Socrates. No ancient historian of philosophy mistook it for the record of an actual event, which, had it occurred, would have been a very important landmark. The *Theaetetus* (183E, p. 101) alludes to this meeting, and it is once more recalled in the *Sophist* (217C, p. 166) in terms that can only refer to the *Parmenides*. The *Theaetetus*, again, ends with an appointment which is kept at the beginning of the *Sophist*; and the *Sophist* itself is openly referred to in the *Statesman*.

As for the order of composition, no one doubts that the *Sophist* and the *Statesman*, which contain one continuous conversation, are later than the *Theaetetus*. In the *Theaetetus* many critics have noticed that the style changes towards the end in the direction of Plato's later manner. If that is so, stylometric results based on the dialogue as a whole will be misleading. The latter part of the *Theaetetus*, as we have it, may have been finished years after the beginning, and the *Parmenides* may have been composed in the interval. On the other hand, we need not suppose any very long gap between the completion of the *Theaetetus* and the composition of the *Sophist* and the *Statesman*.

[1] *Parménide* (1923), p. xii.

It is now agreed that this group as a whole is earlier than the *Timaeus*, the *Philebus*, and the *Laws*, and later than the *Meno*, the *Phaedo*, and the *Republic*. The *Republic* is the centre of a group of less technical works, intended, not primarily for students of philosophy, but for the educated public, who would certainly not read the *Parmenides* and would find the *Theaetetus* and the *Sophist* intolerably difficult. These more popular writings would serve the double purpose of attracting students to the Academy and of making known to the Greek world a doctrine which, in common with most scholars, I hold to be characteristically Platonic. Its two pillars are the immortality and divinity of the rational soul, and the real existence of the objects of its knowledge—a world of intelligible 'Forms' separate from the things our senses perceive.[1] Neither doctrine clearly appears in any dialogue that can be dated, on grounds of style, as distinctly earlier than the *Meno*. Both are put forward in the *Phaedo* in a manner suggesting that Plato arrived at them simultaneously and thought of them as interdependent.

The *Meno* had already announced the theory of *Anamnesis*: that knowledge is acquired, not through the senses or as information conveyed from one mind to another by teaching, but by recollection in this life of realities and truths seen and known by the soul before its incarnation. Socrates bases this doctrine on an account which he believes to be true,[2] learnt from men and women who are wise in religious matters and from inspired poets. The human soul is immortal (divine) and is purified through a round of incarnations, from which, when completely purified, it may finally escape. 'So the soul is immortal and has been many times reborn; and since it has seen all things, both in this world and in the other, there is nothing it has not learnt. No wonder, then, that it can recover the memory of what it has formerly known concerning virtue or any other matter. All Nature is akin and the soul has learnt all things; so there is nothing to prevent one who has recollected—learnt, as we call it—one single thing from discovering all the rest for himself, if he is resolute and unwearying in the search; for seeking or learning is nothing but recollection'.

[1] I agree with Mr. J. D. Mabbott ('Aristotle and the χωρισμός of Plato', *Classical Quarterly*, XX (1926), 72) that the 'separate' existence of the Forms, attacked by Aristotle, is not to be explained away.

[2] *Meno* 81A, λόγος ἀληθής, not μῦθος, though the form which contains the true account may be mythical. So at *Gorgias* 523A he calls the myth of the judgment of the dead a λόγος ἀληθής, though Callicles may think it a μῦθος. I take the Socrates of the *Meno* and the *Phaedo* as stating Plato's beliefs, not those of the historic Socrates.

Socrates goes on to prove this doctrine by experiment. By questioning a slave who has never been taught geometry, he elicits from him, after several wrong attempts, the solution of a not very easy problem of construction. He claims that he has not 'taught' the slave the true belief he now has, any more than the false beliefs he produced at first. At the outset the slave had not knowledge; but these beliefs were in him, including the true belief which he did not know. They have been 'stirred up in him, as it were in a dream', and if he were questioned again and again in various ways, he would end by having knowledge in place of true belief—knowledge which he would have recovered out of his own soul. This knowledge must have been acquired before birth. 'If, then, the truth of things is always in our soul, the soul must be immortal; hence you may confidently set about seeking for and recovering the memory of what you do not know, that is to say, do not remember.' Socrates adds that, in some respects, he could not defend the whole account; but he is convinced of the practical conclusion, that we shall be the better for believing that we can discover truth we do not know. Owing to Plato's dramatic method, we cannot fix the extent of Socrates' reservation. It might mean that the historic Socrates did not hold this theory, or, more probably, that the details of reincarnation, purgatory, and so forth, as described by Pindar and others, are 'mythical': as such Plato always represents them elsewhere. But the reservation does not extend to the hypothetical conclusion which Socrates and Meno have both accepted: *If* the truth of things is always in the soul, *then* the soul is immortal.

Some modern critics, wishing perhaps to transform Plato's theory into something that we can accept, reduce the doctrine of *Anamnesis* to a form in which it ceases to have any connection with the pre-existence of the soul. But Plato unquestionably believed in immortality; and in the *Phaedo*, where Recollection is reaffirmed, it is the one proof of pre-existence which is accepted as satisfactory by all parties to the conversation.

The doctrine of Recollection marks a complete break with current beliefs both about the nature of the soul and about the sources of knowledge. The soul was popularly regarded as a mere shadow or *eidolon*, an unsubstantial wraith, that might well be dissipated when detached from the body. And if common sense could be said to have any view of the common characters called Forms (εἴδη) in the Socratic dialogues, it would be the empiricist view that they are present in sensible things, and that our knowledge of them is conveyed through the senses, perhaps by images, like the Atomists' *eidola*, thrown off by material bodies. Among the

philosophic theories which Socrates, in the *Phaedo*, says he had found unsatisfying is the doctrine ' that it is the brain that gives us perceptions of hearing, sight, and smell, and out of these arise memory and belief, and from these again, when they have settled down into quiescence, comes knowledge '. Plato's break with all theories deriving knowledge by abstraction from sensible objects carried with it an equally firm repudiation of popular notions of the soul as either a flimsy double of the body or a resultant, supervening on the mixture of bodily elements. In other words, the ' separation ' of the Platonic Forms from any dependence on material things went with the separation of the soul which knows them from any dependence on the physical organism. The *Phaedo* is designed to plead for both conclusions concurrently. It is not claimed that either doctrine is proved ; but it is claimed that if the Forms exist and can be known, then the soul is immortal. Plato himself believed both ; and his Socrates, unlike the Socrates of the earlier dialogues, now uses every resource of eloquence to convince his hearers of what he believes but does not know.

In his opening discourse it is assumed from the outset that the soul can exist without the body ; for ' to be dead ' is defined as meaning ' that the body has come to be separate by itself apart from (*χωρὶς*) the soul, and the soul separate by itself apart from the body '. [1] So much might be said of the wraith or shadow-soul of popular belief ; but the properties which Socrates goes on to ascribe to the separable soul are very different. The contrast is not between mind and matter, or even between soul and body as commonly understood. The psyche here is what was later called by Plato and Aristotle the Reason (*νοῦς*), or the spirit, in opposition to the flesh.[2] To the flesh belong the senses, and the bodily appetites and pleasures. The spirit's proper function is thought or reflection, which lays hold upon unseen reality and is best carried on when the spirit withdraws from the flesh to think by itself, untroubled by the senses. The pursuit of wisdom is a ' loosing and separation (*χωρισμός*) of the soul from the body '—a rehearsal of that separation called death (67D).

The effect of this introductory discourse is to establish in the reader's mind, before the argument begins, the idea of a complete detachment of the thinking self from the body and its senses and passions. This idea, though unfamiliar, would be easier for Plato's public to grasp than that detachment of Forms from sensible things

[1] 64C. In the *Gorgias* myth (524B), death is already described as the ' severance (*διάλυσις*) of two things—body and soul—from one another '.

[2] Cf. F. M. Cornford, ' The Division of the Soul ', *Hibbert Journal* (Jan. 1930), p. 206.

which it is his other purpose to announce clearly for the first time. If the reader will forget all that he has learnt about the Forms from later writings and put himself in the situation of Plato's readers who knew only the earlier dialogues, he will find that he is being led, step by step, to recognise the separate existence of the Forms.

The Forms are first mentioned as the objects of the soul's reflection, when withdrawn from the senses. All that is pointed out here (65D) is that those entities which were the familiar topics of Socrates' conversation are perceived by thought, not by the senses. When Socrates and his friends considered, What is Justice?, they were trying to define the Just 'by itself' (*αὐτό*), and to discover 'what it is' (*ὃ ἔστι*) or its 'being' (*οὐσία*). Any reader of the earlier dialogues might agree that Justice, not being a thing that can be seen or touched, will be known by pure thought when the soul is 'set free from eyes and ears and the body as a whole'.

There follows a long and elaborate defence of *Anamnesis*, addressed to the more difficult task of convincing the reader, on the one hand, that the soul has pre-existed, and on the other, that his own vague notions of how we first become acquainted with a thing like 'Justice itself' are radically wrong. We not only cannot perceive it; we cannot extract it from any sense-impressions. This might be argued more easily in the case of the moral Forms, which are obviously not sensible; but Plato is no less concerned with the mathematical Forms. He undertakes to prove that we cannot derive our knowledge of Equality from the perception of equal things. The same two sticks sometimes appear equal to one person and unequal to another; but no one ever thinks that 'equals' are unequal or that Equality is Inequality. The sight of nearly equal things causes us to think of Equality, and we judge that they fall short of that ideal standard. It is argued that we must have obtained knowledge of true Equality before we began to use our senses, that is to say, before our birth; and this carries with it the pre-existence of the soul. Whether the argument seems sound to the modern reader or not, *Anamnesis* is accepted by all parties and later reaffirmed (92A); nor is any doubt ever cast upon it in Plato's other works. The upshot is that the Forms have an existence separate from things as surely as the spirit has an existence separate from the body.

The next argument is to urge that the soul not only has pre-existed, but is by nature indestructible. It is not composed or put together out of parts into which it might be dissolved. It is reasonable, we are told, to identify incomposite things with things

that never undergo any sort of change. Now the reader who has grasped the distinction between ideal Equality and the nearly equal things of sense, will agree that Forms must always be what they are and can suffer no kind of change. The many things that bear the same names as the Forms are perpetually changing in all respects; and these are the things we see and touch, whereas the Forms are unseen. It is thus laid down that there are two orders of things: the unseen, exempt from all change, and the seen, which change perpetually. Finally it is argued as probable that the soul, which is unseen, most resembles the divine, immortal, intelligible, simple, and indissoluble; while the body most resembles the human, mortal, unintelligible, complex, and dissoluble. The separation of the two worlds or orders of being is here very sharply marked. No relation between them is described; no transition from sense to thought is suggested. Even the fact that sensible experience may be the occasion of Recollection is lost sight of. Socrates recurs to the language of his opening discourse. When the soul uses any of the senses, it is dragged down into the world of change and becomes dizzy and confused. Only when thinking by itself can it escape into that other region of pure, eternal, and unchanging being.

Thus, by a series of steps, the reader acquainted with the earlier dialogues is led to see that the moral terms which Socrates was always discussing belong to a distinct order of realities, and that knowledge of them cannot be extracted from impressions of sense. Throughout, the separation of the Forms is intertwined with and illustrated by the separation of the divine spirit from all dependence on the mortal body. The conclusion is that the two doctrines stand or fall together.[1]

The separate reality of the Forms created a problem which is courageously faced, though not solved, in the later group to which our dialogues belong. How are those separate Forms related to the things we touch and see in this world of becoming? The *Phaedo* itself (100C–D) had indicated that to speak of a thing as 'partaking of' a Form is to use a metaphor that leaves it obscure how an eternal and unchanging Form or its character can be 'present in' or 'shared by' transient individual things in time and space. In the *Parmenides* Socrates is represented as putting forward the theory of separate Forms to dispose of Zeno's paradoxical antinomies, and as confronted with this very difficulty of participation by Zeno's master, Parmenides. It is significant that the great founder of the Eleatic school should dominate the discussion here, and that a Stranger from Elea should take the lead in the *Sophist*

[1] *Phaedo* 76DE, 92D.

and the *Statesman*. Parmenides had been the first to raise the problem which the theory of Forms was intended to solve. This problem had two aspects. In Parmenides' poem it is presented chiefly as the problem that arises when a world of real being is distinguished from a world of 'seeming' or appearance, which is somehow false and unreal, or, as Parmenides himself declared, totally false and unreal. This aspect we shall encounter, as the problem of *eidola*, stated, but not solved, in the *Sophist*. Parmenides had also drawn the corresponding distinction between the senses, which profess to reveal appearances, and rational thought apprehending true reality. The *Theaetetus* will formulate and examine the claim of the senses to yield knowledge. The discussion moves in the world of appearance and proves that, if we try to leave out of account the world of true being, we cannot extract knowledge from sensible experience.

The theory of Forms, as stated in the *Phaedo*, was meant to deal with both aspects of the problem bequeathed by Parmenides. The eternal and intelligible Forms were to provide rational thought with objects of knowledge. The transient existence or 'becoming' of sensible things in the world of appearance was to be grounded in the world of true being by some kind of participation; they were thus to be endowed with an ambiguous half-reality, not left, as in Parmenides' uncompromising system, totally unsupported. But our series of dialogues opens with a trenchant criticism of Plato's own theory as giving no intelligible account of the derivation of appearances from reality. The discussion starts from Zeno's counter-attack on the critics of Parmenides. Zeno had put forward a series of arguments, reducing (as he thought) to absurdity their defence of the common-sense belief in the existence of a plurality of real things. His first argument is quoted: 'If there are many things, then they must be both like and unlike.' From both horns of the dilemma Zeno deduced what he regarded as impossible consequences. Socrates replies that no impossibilities result, if you recognise 'a Form, Likeness, just by itself', and another contrary Form, Unlikeness. That things which are simply 'alike' and nothing else should be 'unlike' is no doubt impossible; but there is no difficulty in supposing that individual concrete things should partake of both Forms at once and so come to be both like and unlike. One thing can have many names, partake of many Forms, some of which may be contrary to others. The difficulties disappear 'if you distinguish the Forms apart by themselves' and realise that individual things partake of them.

Parmenides' criticisms are directed against this 'separation' (*χωρισμός*) of the Forms, on which the *Phaedo* had laid so much

stress,[1] and the consequent difficulty of conceiving clearly the 'participation' which is to bridge the gulf. Socrates is confronted with two questions, which he finds it difficult to answer.

The first is the extent of the world of Forms. Several classes of terms are mentioned, and Socrates is asked if he recognises separate Forms for each class. (1) First come the terms which had figured in Zeno's dilemmas: Likeness, Unlikeness; Unity, Plurality; Motion, Rest, etc.[2] To these are added (2) the moral Forms, 'Just, Beautiful, Good, etc.'. About these two classes Socrates has no doubts. (3) The next class contains (*a*) Forms such as 'Man', 'separate from ourselves and all other men', and (*b*) Fire and Water. (These terms correspond to the products of divine workmanship described in the *Sophist* 266B (p. 326): 'ourselves and all other living creatures and the elements of natural things —fire, water, and their kindred'. Living organisms and the four elements of which all bodies are composed are the two classes of things in the physical world with the best claim to represent Forms —the models after which the divine creator of the *Timaeus* works.) Socrates says he has often felt some uncertainty about these. (Probably they were not contemplated in the early stages of the theory, which started with mathematical and moral Forms. But they are contemplated in the *Timaeus*.[3]) Last come (4) Hair, Clay, Dirt, and other undignified things. (Hair, an organic part of a living creature, was one of Anaxagoras' homœomerous substances; and here it may stand for all organic compounds of the elementary bodies. 'Clay', as Socrates remarks at *Theaetetus* 147C (p. 22), is 'earth mixed with moisture'. Clay and Dirt, as casual mixtures of the elements, have the least claim to Forms.) Socrates at first replies that he thinks there are no Forms for these undignified things; but he has been troubled with doubts 'whether it may not be the same with everything'. Then, fearing to fall into an abyss of absurdity, he has returned to the study of Forms of the first two classes. Parmenides remarks that when he is older he

[1] *Parm.* 129D (Socrates), *ἐάν τις διαιρῆται χωρὶς αὐτὰ καθ' αὑτὰ τὰ εἴδη.* 130B (Parmenides), *αὐτὸς σὺ οὕτω διῄρησαι ὡς λέγεις, χωρὶς μὲν εἴδη αὐτὰ ἄττα, χωρὶς δὲ τὰ τούτων αὖ μετέχοντα; καί τί σοι δοκεῖ εἶναι αὐτὴ ὁμοιότης χωρὶς ἧς ἡμεῖς ὁμοιότητος ἔχομεν.* Here 'the likeness we have' is distinguished from the Form, Likeness itself, as in the *Phaedo*, 'the tallness in us' is distinguished from Tallness itself. The separate Form is conceived as somehow communicating its character (*ἰδέα, μορφή*) to the individual thing. But how?

[2] Motion and Rest are included at 129E (cf. *Phaedrus* 261D). These terms (and the moral Forms) will reappear among the 'common terms' of *Theaetetus* 185C ff. (p. 104), where 'unity and number in general', 'odd' and 'even', etc., are added. The mathematical Forms belong to this class.

[3] *Timaeus* 51C (on Forms of the elements) practically quotes *Parm.* 130D.

will be more philosophical and pay less regard to vulgar esteem. Here this question is dropped. No mention has been made of Forms for artificial objects or for sensible qualities like Hot and Cold, although 'Hot' and 'Cold' had figured in the ideal theory of the *Phaedo*, and the *Republic* had appeared to recognise a divinely created Form of Bedstead.

What is the extent of the world of Forms? Plato never answers this question.[1] The difficulty arises from the double origin of the theory. As Aristotle tells us in his account of Platonism,[2] one root was the Socratic inquiry after the definition of 'universals'. Socrates, who was not concerned with any system of Nature, confined himself to the attempt to define moral terms, such as 'Just'. Plato (who was concerned with ontology), accepting the Heracleitean Flux as applied to sensible things, saw that the subject of a Socratic definition could not be any sensible thing, since such things are in perpetual change and cannot be known; so he said that it must be a separate entity, to which he gave the name 'Form', and that the group of sensible things bearing the same name partake of that Form. The underlying assumption here is that every common name must have a fixed meaning, which we think of when we hear the name spoken: speaker and hearer thus have the same object before their minds. Only so can they understand one another and any discourse be possible. On this showing, however, all common names have the same right to have a Form for their meaning; and so we arrive at the statement (*Rep.* 596A): 'we are accustomed to assume a single form (*or* character, εἶδος) for every set of things to which we apply the same name.' We can say: 'This is hot', 'This is dirty', 'This is human', 'This is just', and so on. If all such statements are on the same footing, we ought to recognise a common character or Form for every existing common name, and moreover for every entity that might be distinguished by a separate name. The world of Forms ought to be indefinitely more numerous than the vocabulary of any language.

But how does this theory look if we start from the other root of Platonism—the Pythagorean doctrine of Numbers as the real being of all things? According to Aristotle, Plato conceived the relation of things to Forms in the same way as the Pythagoreans conceived the relation of things to Numbers: when he said that things 'partake of' Forms he was only making a verbal change in their

[1] If *Epistle* VII, 342A ff. be accepted as genuine, Plato recognised, at the end of his life, Forms of mathematical objects, moral terms, every natural and artificial body, the four elements, every species of living creature, every moral quality, all actions and affections (342D).

[2] *Metaph.* A, 6.

statement that things 'represent' (*or* embody) Numbers. The Form now becomes something more than the meaning of a common name —an entity whose metaphysical status Socrates, probably, had never inquired into. Socrates had 'no system of Nature'; but Plato endows the Forms with a 'separate' existence in an intelligible world of true being, where they replace the Pythagorean Numbers as the reality which appearances are somehow to represent. There is no trouble about the mathematical Forms, which are certainly distinct from visible and tangible bodies and constitute a realm of eternal truth. The moral Forms, again, may stand as ideals, never perfectly embodied in human action and character. Forms of both these classes can be maintained as eternal things which the soul can know (as the *Phaedo* asserts) without any recourse to the bodily senses. Further, when we come to physics, we can accommodate the fixed types of natural species and of the four elements. But what is to be said of the legion of other common names—nouns, adjectives, verbs—which also have fixed meanings? 'Clay' is a common name; but can physics or metaphysics recognise an eternal exemplar of clay and of every distinguishable variety of clay? And what of sensible qualities, like hot and cold? Is Heat or Cold or Redness the sort of object that can be known, independently of all sense experience, by a disembodied soul? Is Redness or Hotness an eternally real Form accounting for the 'becoming' of red or hot things in the physical world? Do bodies 'partake' of Redness when no one is seeing them, or of Hotness when no one feels their heat? Such may have been the questions which embarrassed Plato with the uncertainty confessed by Socrates in the *Parmenides*. The most formidable consequence of recognising a Form for every common name would be that no limit could then be set to the world of Forms. The unlimited cannot be known, and if the Forms are unknowable, their *raison d'être* is gone. But Plato leaves this question without an answer.

Parmenides then turns to his second line of criticism: How are the separate Forms related to the things that 'partake of' them?

(1) If we press one natural meaning of 'partake' or 'share', are we to suppose that the Form as a whole is in each of the things, or that each thing contains a part of it? Either supposition is absurd. This dilemma can, indeed, be taken as merely an objection to certain misleading associations of the word 'partake'.[1] Many things can 'share' in one Form in the sense that they all have the same relation to it. But the question, what that relation can be, remains unanswered.

(2) The suggestion that the Forms might be only a 'thought' in

[1] Cf. G. C. Field in *Mind*, xxxvi, pp. 87 ff.

our minds is decisively rejected. The Form is not a mental existent ; it must be an object of thought, of which any number of minds may, or may not, think.

(3) Finally it is suggested that, while the Form has its separate reality, what is present here is not the Form, but a copy or image of it. One original can have many copies. The relation will then be 'likeness'. But this will lead to an infinite regress. If the original and the copy are alike, they have a common character, but then there will be just as much reason to posit another Form for original and copy to partake of as there was to posit the original Form for all the copies to partake of. The conclusion is that the relation 'partaking' cannot be reduced to 'likeness', but we must look for some other account of it. The point might be argued thus : it may be true that the copy is, at least in some degree, like the original ; but that cannot be all that is meant. Likeness subsists between any two copies, but we do not say that one copy 'partakes of' another.

The upshot of all this criticism is that no intelligible account has yet been given of the relation between Forms and things ; the metaphors will not bear serious scrutiny. Parmenides ends with a picture of the ideal world as withdrawn beyond the reach of human knowledge. A god might know the Forms, but can we know anything beyond the things in our world ? On the other hand, Parmenides himself acknowledges that the Forms are a necessity of thought ; without them philosophic discourse, or indeed discourse of any kind, is impossible. This conclusion can only mean that the difficulties cannot be insuperable. Plato's intention may be to show that he is as aware as any of his critics that they exist, and to set his pupils to think about them.

There is one further problem, mooted by Socrates himself in the *Parmenides*, which is dealt with in the *Sophist*. This concerns the relations of Forms, not to things, but to one another. Socrates has just made his point that, if separate Forms are recognised, a concrete thing can very well partake both of Likeness and of Unlikeness. 'But,' he then adds, 'if you do separate the Forms apart by themselves—Likeness and Unlikeness, Plurality and Unity, Motion and Rest, and all such things—it would be extraordinarily interesting to me if anyone could then show that these Forms themselves can be combined and separated . . . if one could exhibit this same problem as everywhere involved in the Forms themselves,' as we have seen it to be in visible things.[1] This challenge is not taken up in the early part of the *Parmenides*. The terms 'combined' and 'separated' we shall find in the *Sophist* used for the

[1] *Parm.* 129E.

relations reflected in affirmative and negative true statements about Forms. This problem is confined to the ideal world; it would remain if there were no sensible things at all. In such statements as 'Likeness exists', 'Likeness is different from Unlikeness', the meaning consists entirely of Forms; there is no reference to individual things, and the problem of participation does not arise. The question is: How can the unity of the Form, which had been so much emphasised, be reconciled with its 'blending' with other Forms? A Form is 'one being'. Does it, like Parmenides' One Being, exclude any sort of plurality, or is a Form both one and many?

This question is bound up with the methods of Collection and Division, which will be illustrated in the *Sophist* and there identified with the dialectical study of the Forms. The early part of the *Parmenides* points forward to the analysis of the blending of Forms in that context. Meanwhile, some of the arguments in the later part have a positive bearing on this question of their unity. Take the bare Eleatic dilemmas: Either a thing is or it is not; Either a thing is one (and not many) or it is many (and not one); If the One is, the many are not; if the many are, the One is not. Such reasoning must leave us either with a One Being, or Existent Unity, excluding all plurality (as in Parmenides' own system), or with a plurality having no sort of unity. Now, some of the arguments developed in the second part of the *Parmenides* show that on either hypothesis no knowledge or discourse is possible. A bare unity or a bare plurality cannot exist or be known or even spoken of. These results are deduced by reasoning at least as cogent as Zeno's; and in the *Sophist* Parmenides' One Being will be criticised on similar lines. The arguments point to a positive conclusion: the unity of the 'beings' recognised by Platonism—the whole realm of Forms as a 'one being' and each Form as a 'one being'—must be shown to be consistent with their being also complex and so a plurality. The study of Forms in the *Sophist* will clear up the perplexities and paradoxes based by the Eleatics and their successors on the too rigid Parmenidean conceptions of Unity and Being, Plurality and Not-being.

But before passing to the world of Forms, where the true objects of knowledge are to be found, Plato fixes attention, in the *Theaetetus*, on the world of transient becoming and ambiguous appearance, revealed by the senses. Writing for students acquainted with the great systems of the sixth and fifth centuries, he is now prepared to set his own doctrine beside the two opposed philosophies of Parmenides and Heracleitus, and to define what he will take, and what he will not take, from either. He will also meet the challenge

of the first and greatest of the Sophists. Protagoras, in conscious opposition to Parmenides, had flatly denied that 'what seems to men'—what seems real to our senses and true to our judgment—is to be condemned as unreal or false because it disagrees with the properties ascribed by Eleatic reasoning to a One Being which we can never perceive. Man, declares Protagoras, is the measure of all things; what seems real and true to me is real and true to me; what seems so to you, is so to you. Your perceptions and judgments may not agree with mine; but neither of us can have any ground for saying that the other is wrong. Such was the fundamental position of that Sophistry which Plato intends to analyse in the second of our two dialogues. The Sophist is the denizen of the world of appearances; they are for him the sole reality. Plato himself cannot accept Parmenides' condemnation of appearances as totally unreal and of the senses as totally misleading. Accordingly, the *Theaetetus* examines afresh the claim of this lower world to yield knowledge—a claim that common sense would endorse and that Protagoras himself had pressed to the point of declaring that it yields the only knowledge we can ever have.

THEAETETUS

142A–143C. THE INTRODUCTORY DIALOGUE

THE main dialogue is prefaced by an introductory conversation between Eucleides and Terpsion of Megara, friends of Socrates who were present at his death. Plato evidently wished to record his affection for Theaetetus, a member of the Academy credited with important discoveries in mathematics. Eucleides' account of how he came to write the main dialogue is obviously fictitious. No such conversation could have taken place in Socrates' lifetime.

The anonymous commentary on the *Theaetetus*,[1] believed to date from the first or second century of our era, records the existence of a second 'rather frigid' introductory dialogue of about the same number of lines, beginning, 'Boy, are you bringing the dialogue about Theaetetus?' It has been argued that this lost introduction was probably written by Plato—for why should anyone forge such a document?—and that the obvious occasion for substituting the existing one would be the death of Theaetetus. The conclusion would then be that the main dialogue was at least partly written before that event. But it is not likely that the long and flattering description in the main dialogue of Theaetetus as a youth was written in his lifetime; and if it was not, the lost introduction may be assumed to have been merely a rejected draft which happened to be preserved. The whole dialogue—introduction and all—may, then, be dated after the fighting near Corinth in 369 B.C.[2] Theaetetus would then be a little under 50, if he was a lad of 15 or 16 in the year of Socrates' death, the imaginary date of the main dialogue.

EUCLEIDES. TERPSION

142. EUCLEIDES. Have you only just come to town, Terpsion?
TERPSION. No, some time ago. What is more, I was looking for you in the market-place and surprised that I could not find you.
EUCL. I was not in the city.

[1] Ed. Diels-Schubart, Berl. Klassikertexte, 1905.

[2] The case for this date is fully argued by Eva Sachs, *De Theaeteto* (Berlin, 1914), pp. 22 ff.

142. TERPS. Where were you, then?
EUCL. On my way down to the harbour I met them carrying Theaetetus to Athens from the camp at Corinth.
TERPS. Alive or dead?
B. EUCL. Only just alive. He is suffering from severe wounds, and still more from having caught the sickness that has broken out in the army.
TERPS. The dysentery?
EUCL. Yes.
TERPS. How sad that such a man should be so near death!
EUCL. An admirable man, Terpsion, and a brave one. Indeed, only just now I was hearing warm praise of his conduct in the battle.
TERPS. There is nothing strange in that; it would have been much more surprising if he had behaved otherwise.
C. But why did he not stay here at Megara?
EUCL. He was eager to get home. I begged him to stay, but he would not listen to my advice. I went some way with him, and then, as I was coming back, I recalled what Socrates had said about him, and was filled with wonder at this signal instance of his prophetic insight. Socrates must have met him shortly before his own death, when Theaetetus was little more than a boy. They had some talk together, and Socrates was delighted with the promise he showed. When I visited Athens he repeated to me their conversation,
D. which was well worth the hearing; and he added that Theaetetus could not fail to become a remarkable man if he lived.
TERPS. And apparently he was right. But what was this conversation? Could you repeat it?
EUCL. Certainly not, just from memory. But I made
143. some notes at the time, as soon as I got home, and later on I wrote out what I could recall at my leisure. Then, every time I went to Athens, I questioned Socrates upon any point where my memory had failed and made corrections on my return. In this way I have pretty well the whole conversation written down.
TERPS. True; I have heard you mention it before, and indeed I have always meant to ask you to show it to me; only I have let the matter slip till this moment. Why should we not go through it now? In any case I am in need of a rest after my walk to town.
B. EUCL. For that matter, I should be glad of a rest myself; for I went as far as Erineon with Theaetetus. Let us go

143B. indoors, and, while we are resting, my servant shall read to us.

TERPS. Very well.

EUCL. This is the book, Terpsion. You see how I wrote the conversation—not in narrative form, as I heard it from Socrates, but as a dialogue between him and the other persons he told me had taken part. These were Theodorus the geometer and Theaetetus. I wanted to avoid in the
C. written account the tiresome effect of bits of narrative interrupting the dialogue, such as 'and I said' or 'and I remarked' wherever Socrates was speaking of himself, and 'he assented' or 'he did not agree', where he reported the answer. So I left out everything of that sort, and wrote it as a direct conversation between the actual speakers.[1]

TERPS. That was quite a good notion, Eucleides.

EUCL. Well, boy, take the book and read.

THE MAIN DIALOGUE

The main dialogue is an imaginary conversation, supposed to have taken place shortly before the trial and death of Socrates, a date at which Theaetetus would be just old enough to take part. He is introduced to Socrates by Theodorus of Cyrene, a distinguished mathematician who has been lecturing on geometry at Athens.

143D–151D. *Introductory Conversation*

The opening section characterises the speakers and introduces the subject of discussion: the definition of knowledge. For the rest, it is concerned with method. Socrates, as in several earlier dialogues, dwells on the distinction (which must, it seems, have been difficult for the ordinary reader to grasp) between giving a number of instances of knowledge and defining the meaning of the name 'knowledge' which applies to them all. He ends by describing his own technique. Like the midwife who is past childbearing, Socrates' function is not to produce his own ideas and impart them to others, but to deliver their minds of thoughts with which they are in labour, and then to test whether these thoughts are genuine children or mere phantoms.

[1] Since the *Parmenides* is composed in the narrative form here rejected as tiresome and never again used by Plato, it may be inferred that this introductory dialogue was written after the *Parmenides*.

SOCRATES. THEODORUS. THEAETETUS

143D. SOCRATES. If I took more interest in the affairs of Cyrene, Theodorus, I should ask you for the news from those parts and whether any of the young men there are devoting themselves to geometry or to any other sort of liberal study. But really I care more for our young men here and I am anxious rather to know which of them are thought likely to distinguish themselves. That is what I am always on the look-out for myself, to the best of my powers, and I make inquiries of anyone whose society I see the young men ready to seek. Now you attract a large following, as you
E. deserve for your skill in geometry, not to mention your other merits. So, if you have met with anyone worthy of mention, I should be glad to hear of it.

THEODORUS. Yes, Socrates, I have met with a youth of this city who certainly deserves mention, and you will find it worth while to hear me describe him. If he were handsome, I should be afraid to use strong terms, lest I should be suspected of being in love with him. However, he is not handsome, but—forgive my saying so—he resembles you in being snub-nosed and having prominent eyes, though
144. these features are less marked in him. So I can speak without fear. I assure you that, among all the young men I have met with—and I have had to do with a good many—I have never found such admirable gifts. The combination of a rare quickness of intelligence with exceptional gentleness and of an incomparably virile spirit with both, is a thing that I should hardly have believed could exist, and I have never seen it before. In general, people who have such keen and ready wits and such good memories as he, are also quick-tempered and passionate; they dart about
B. like ships without ballast, and their temperament is rather enthusiastic than strong; whereas the steadier sort are somewhat dull when they come to face study, and they forget everything. But his approach to learning and inquiry, with the perfect quietness of its smooth and sure progress, is like the noiseless flow of a stream of oil. It is wonderful how he achieves all this at his age.

SOCR. That is good news. Who is his father?

THEOD. I have heard the name, but I do not remember it. However, there he is, the middle one of those three
C. who are coming towards us. He and these friends of his have been rubbing themselves with oil in the portico outside,

144c. and, now they have finished, they seem to be coming this way. See if you recognise him.

SOCR. Yes, I do; his father was Euphronius of Sunium, just such another as his son is by your account. He was a man of good standing, and I believe he left a considerable fortune. But I don't know the lad's name.

D. THEOD. His name is Theaetetus, Socrates; but I fancy the property has been squandered by trustees. None the less, liberality with his money is another of his admirable traits.

SOCR. You give him a noble character. Please ask him to come and sit down with us.

THEOD. I will. Theaetetus, come this way and sit by Socrates.

SOCR. Yes, do, Theaetetus, so that I may study the char-

E. acter of my own countenance; for Theodorus tells me it is like yours. Now, suppose we each had a lyre, and Theodorus said they were both tuned to the same pitch, should we take his word at once, or should we try to find out whether he was a musician?

THEAET. We should try to find that out.

SOCR. And believe him, if we discovered that he was musical, but not otherwise?

THEAET. True.

SOCR. And now, if this alleged likeness of our faces is a matter of any interest to us, we must ask whether it is a

145. skilled draughtsman who informs us of it.

THEAET. I agree.

SOCR. Well, is Theodorus a painter?

THEAET. Not so far as I know.

SOCR. Nor an expert in geometry either?

THEAET. Of course he is, Socrates; very much so.

SOCR. And also in astronomy and calculation and music and in all the liberal arts?

THEAET. I am sure he is.

SOCR. Then, if, in the way of compliment or otherwise, he tells us of some physical likeness between us, there is no special reason why we should attend to him.

THEAET. Possibly not.

B. SOCR. But suppose he should praise the mind of either of us for its virtue and intelligence. Would there not be good reason why the one who heard the other praised should be eager to examine him, and he should be equally eager to show his quality?

145B. THEAET. Certainly, Socrates.

SOCR. Now is the time, then, my dear Theaetetus, for you to show your qualities and for me to examine them. I can assure you that, often as Theodorus has spoken to me in praise of citizen or stranger, he has never praised anyone as he was praising you just now.

THEAET. That is good hearing, Socrates. But perhaps he

C. was not speaking seriously.

SOCR. No, that would not be like Theodorus. Do not try to slip out of your bargain on the pretext that he was not serious. We don't want him to have to give evidence on oath. In any case no one is going to indict him for perjury; so do not be afraid to abide by your agreement.[1]

THEAET. Well, so it shall be, if you wish it.

SOCR. Tell me, then: you are learning some geometry from Theodorus?

THEAET. Yes.

D. SOCR. And astronomy and harmonics and arithmetic?

THEAET. I certainly do my best to learn.

SOCR. So do I, from him and from anyone else who seems to understand these things. I do moderately well in general; but all the same I am puzzled about one small matter which you and our friends must help me to think out. Tell me: is it not true that learning about something means becoming wiser in that matter?

THEAET. Of course.

SOCR. And what makes people wise is wisdom, I suppose.

THEAET. Yes.

E. SOCR. And is that in any way different from knowledge?

THEAET. Is what different?

SOCR. Wisdom. Are not people wise in the things of which they have knowledge?

THEAET. Certainly.

SOCR. Then knowledge and wisdom are the same thing?

THEAET. Yes.

SOCR. Well, that is precisely what I am puzzled about: I cannot make out to my own satisfaction what knowledge is.

146. Can we answer that question? What do you all say? Which of us will speak first? Everyone who misses shall 'sit down and be donkey', as children say when

[1] I question Burnet's punctuation here. The last sentence seems to mean: 'Even if he were on oath, there is no one to indict him for perjury, but you can keep your agreement without fear of getting him into trouble by not coming up to his estimate.'

146. they are playing at ball ; anyone who gets through without missing shall be king and have the right to make us answer any question he likes. Why are you all silent ? I hope, Theodorus, that my passion for argument is not making me ill-mannered, in my eagerness to start a conversation and set us all at ease with one another like friends ?

B. THEOD. Not at all, Socrates ; there is nothing ill-mannered in that. But please ask one of these young people to answer your questions ; I am not at home in an abstract discussion of this sort, nor likely to become so at my age. But it is just the thing for them, and they have a far better prospect of improvement ; youth, indeed, is capable of improving at anything. So do not let Theaetetus off ; go on putting your questions to him.

SOCR. You hear what Theodorus says, Theaetetus. I do

C. not think you will want to disobey him ; and it would be wrong for you not to do what an older and wiser man bids you. So tell me, in a generous spirit, what you think knowledge is.

THEAET. Well, Socrates, I cannot refuse, since you and Theodorus ask me. Anyhow, if I do make a mistake, you will set me right.

SOCR. By all means, if we can.

THEAET. Then I think the things one can learn from Theodorus are knowledge—geometry and all the sciences you mentioned just now ; and then there are the crafts of

D. the cobbler and other workmen. Each and all of these are knowledge and nothing else.

SOCR. You are generous indeed, my dear Theaetetus—so open-handed that, when you are asked for one simple thing, you offer a whole variety.

THEAET. What do you mean, Socrates ?

SOCR. There may be nothing in it, but I will explain what my notion is. When you speak of cobbling, you mean by that word precisely a knowledge of shoe-making ?

THEAET. Precisely.

E. SOCR. And when you speak of carpentry, you mean just a knowledge of how to make wooden furniture ?

THEAET. Yes.

SOCR. In both cases, then, you are defining what the craft is a knowledge of ?

THEAET. Yes.

SOCR. But the question you were asked, Theaetetus, was not, what are the objects of knowledge, nor yet how many

146E. sorts of knowledge there are. We did not want to count them, but to find out what the thing itself—knowledge—is. Is there nothing in that?

THEAET. No, you are quite right.

147. SOCR. Take another example. Suppose we were asked about some obvious common thing, for instance, what clay is; it would be absurd to answer: potters' clay, and oven-makers' clay, and brick-makers' clay.

THEAET. No doubt.

SOCR. To begin with, it is absurd to imagine that our answer conveys any meaning to the questioner, when we use the word 'clay', no matter whose clay we call it—the doll-

B. maker's or any other craftsman's. You do not suppose a man can understand the name of a thing, when he does not know what the thing is?

THEAET. Certainly not.

SOCR. Then, if he has no idea of knowledge, 'knowledge about shoes' conveys nothing to him?

THEAET. No.

SOCR. 'Cobblery', in fact, or the name of any other art has no meaning for anyone who has no conception of knowledge.

THEAET. That is so.

SOCR. Then, when we are asked what knowledge is, it is absurd to reply by giving the name of some art. The answer is: 'knowledge of so-and-so'; but that was not what the

C. question called for.

THEAET. So it seems.

SOCR. And besides, we are going an interminable way round, when our answer might be quite short and simple. In this question about clay, for instance, the simple and ordinary thing to say is that clay is earth mixed with moisture, never mind whose clay it may be.

THEAET. It appears easy now, Socrates, when you put it like that. The meaning of your question seems to be the same sort of thing as a point that came up when your

D. namesake, Socrates here, and I were talking not long ago.[1]

SOCR. What was that, Theaetetus?

THEAET. Theodorus here was proving to us something about square roots, namely, that the sides (or roots) of squares representing three square feet and five square feet

[1] The following passage is discussed and interpreted by Sir Thomas Heath, *Greek Mathematics*, i, 155, and *The Thirteen Books of Euclid's Elements*, ii, 288. Theaetetus' friend, the young Socrates, takes his place as respondent in the *Statesman*.

147D. are not commensurable in length with the line representing one foot ; and he went on in this way, taking all the separate cases up to the root of seventeen square feet. There for some reason he stopped. The idea occurred to us, seeing that these square roots were evidently infinite in number, to try to arrive at a single collective term by which we
E. could designate all these roots.

SOCR. And did you find one ?

THEAET. I think so ; but I should like your opinion.

SOCR. Go on.

THEAET. We divided number in general into two classes. Any number which is the product of a number multiplied by itself we likened to the square figure, and we called such a number ' square ' or ' equilateral '.

SOCR. Well done !

THEAET. Any intermediate number, such as 3 or 5 or any
148. number that cannot be obtained by multiplying a number by itself, but has one factor either greater or less than the other, so that the sides containing the corresponding figure are always unequal, we likened to the oblong figure, and we called it an oblong number.

SOCR. Excellent ; and what next ?

THEAET. All the lines which form the four equal sides of the plane figure representing the equilateral number we defined as *length*, while those which form the sides of squares
B. equal in area to the oblongs we called ' *roots* '(surds), as not being commensurable with the others in length, but only in the plane areas to which their squares are equal. And there is another distinction of the same sort in the case of solids.

SOCR. Nothing could be better, my young friends ; I am sure there will be no prosecuting Theodorus for false witness.

THEAET. But, Socrates, I cannot answer your question about knowledge as we answered the question about the length and the root. And yet you seem to want something of that kind ; so, on the contrary, it does appear that Theodorus was not speaking the truth.

C. SOCR. Why, if he had praised your powers of running and declared that he had never met with a young man who was so good a runner, and then you had been beaten in a race by the greatest of runners at the height of his powers, do you think that his praise would have been any the less truthful ?

THEAET. No, I don't.

SOCR. Well, as I said just now, do you fancy it is a small

148C. matter to discover the nature of knowledge? Is it not one of the hardest questions?

THEAET. One of the very hardest, I should say.

SOCR. You may be reassured, then, about Theodorus'
D. account of you, and set your mind on finding a definition of knowledge, as of anything else, with all the zeal at your command.

THEAET. If it depends on my zeal, Socrates, the truth will come to light.

SOCR. Forward, then, on the way you have just shown so well. Take as a model your answer about the roots: just as you found a single character to embrace all that multitude, so now try to find a single formula that applies to the many kinds of knowledge.

E. THEAET. But I assure you, Socrates, I have often set myself to study that problem, when I heard reports of the questions you ask. But I cannot persuade myself that I can give any satisfactory solution or that anyone has ever stated in my hearing the sort of answer you require. And yet I cannot get the question out of my mind.

SOCR. My dear Theaetetus, that is because your mind is not empty or barren. You are suffering the pains of travail.

THEAET. I don't know about that, Socrates. I am only telling you how I feel.

149. SOCR. How absurd of you, never to have heard that I am the son of a midwife, a fine buxom woman called Phaenarete!

THEAET. I have heard that.

SOCR. Have you also been told that I practise the same art?

THEAET. No, never.

SOCR. It is true, though; only don't give away my secret. It is not known that I possess this skill; so the ignorant world describes me in other terms as an eccentric person who reduces people to hopeless perplexity. Have you been told that too?

B. THEAET. I have.

SOCR. Shall I tell you the reason?

THEAET. Please do.

SOCR. Consider, then, how it is with all midwives; that will help you to understand what I mean. I dare say you know that they never attend other women in childbirth so long as they themselves can conceive and bear children, but only when they are too old for that.

149B. THEAET. Of course.

SOCR. They say that is because Artemis, the patroness of childbirth, is herself childless; and so, while she did not allow barren women to be midwives, because it is
C. beyond the power of human nature to achieve skill without any experience, she assigned the privilege to women who were past child-bearing, out of respect to their likeness to herself.

THEAET. That sounds likely.

SOCR. And it is more than likely, is it not, that no one can tell so well as a midwife whether women are pregnant or not?

THEAET. Assuredly.

SOCR. Moreover, with the drugs and incantations they
D. administer, midwives can either bring on the pains of travail or allay them at their will, make a difficult labour easy, and at an early stage cause a miscarriage if they so decide.

THEAET. True.

SOCR. Have you also observed that they are the cleverest match-makers, having an unerring skill in selecting a pair whose marriage will produce the best children?

THEAET. I was not aware of that.

SOCR. Well, you may be sure they pride themselves on
E. that more than on cutting the umbilical cord. Consider the knowledge of the sort of plant or seed that should be sown in any given soil; does not that go together with skill in tending and harvesting the fruits of the earth? They are not two different arts?

THEAET. No, the same.

SOCR. And so with a woman; skill in the sowing is not to be separated from skill in the harvesting?

THEAET. Probably not.

150. SOCR. No; only, because there is that wrong and ignorant way of bringing together man and woman which they call pandering, midwives, out of self-respect, are shy even of matchmaking, for fear of falling under the accusation of pandering. Yet the genuine midwife is the only successful matchmaker.

THEAET. That is clear.

SOCR. All this, then, lies within the midwife's province; but her performance falls short of mine. It is not the way of women sometimes to bring forth real children,
B. sometimes mere phantoms, such that it is hard to tell the

150B. one from the other. If it were so, the highest and noblest task of the midwife would be to discern the real from the unreal, would it not?

THEAET. I agree.

SOCR. My art of midwifery is in general like theirs; the only difference is that my patients are men, not women, and my concern is not with the body but with the soul that is in travail of birth. And the highest point of my

C. art is the power to prove by every test whether the offspring of a young man's thought is a false phantom or instinct with life and truth. I am so far like the midwife, that I cannot myself give birth to wisdom; and the common reproach is true, that, though I question others, I can myself bring nothing to light because there is no wisdom in me. The reason is this: heaven constrains me to serve as a midwife, but has debarred me from giving birth.

D. So of myself I have no sort of wisdom, nor has any discovery ever been born to me as the child of my soul. Those who frequent my company at first appear, some of them, quite unintelligent; but, as we go further with our discussions, all who are favoured by heaven make progress at a rate that seems surprising to others as well as to themselves, although it is clear that they have never learnt anything from me; the many admirable truths they bring to birth have been discovered by themselves from within. But the delivery is heaven's work and mine.

E. The proof of this is that many who have not been conscious of my assistance but have made light of me, thinking it was all their own doing, have left me sooner than they should, whether under others' influence or of their own motion, and thenceforward suffered miscarriage of their thoughts through falling into bad company; and they have lost the children of whom I had delivered them by bringing them up badly, caring more for false phantoms than for the true; and so at last their lack of understanding

151. has become apparent to themselves and to everyone else. Such a one was Aristides, son of Lysimachus, and there have been many more. When they come back and beg for a renewal of our intercourse with extravagant protestations, sometimes the divine warning that comes to me forbids it; with others it is permitted, and these begin again to make progress. In yet another way, those who seek my company have the same experience as a woman with child: they suffer the pains of labour and, by night

151. and day, are full of distress far greater than a woman's;
B. and my art has power to bring on these pangs or to allay them. So it fares with these; but there are some, Theaetetus, whose minds, as I judge, have never conceived at all. I see that they have no need of me and with all goodwill I seek a match for them. Without boasting unduly, I can guess pretty well whose society will profit them. I have arranged many of these matches with Prodicus, and with other men of inspired sagacity.

And now for the upshot of this long discourse of mine. I suspect that, as you yourself believe, your mind is in labour with some thought it has conceived. Accept, then, the
C. ministration of a midwife's son who himself practises his mother's art, and do the best you can to answer the questions I ask. Perhaps when I examine your statements I may judge one or another of them to be an unreal phantom. If I then take the abortion from you and cast it away, do not be savage with me like a woman robbed of her first child. People have often felt like that towards me and been positively ready to bite me for taking away some foolish notion they have conceived. They do not see that I am doing them a kindness. They have not learnt
D. that no divinity is ever ill-disposed towards man, nor is such action on my part due to unkindness; it is only that I am not permitted to acquiesce in falsehood and suppress the truth.

So, Theaetetus, start again and try to explain what knowledge is. Never say it is beyond your power; it will not be so, if heaven wills and you take courage.

Midwifery and Anamnesis.—It is significant that this introductory conversation runs closely parallel with the first part of an earlier dialogue, the *Meno*. When asked to define Virtue, Meno made the same mistake as Theaetetus, offering a list of virtues instead of a definition of the 'single form' common to them all. Socrates' illustration of a correct definition ('Figure' means 'the boundary of a solid') was drawn, as here, from mathematics. Meno's complaint that Socrates does nothing but reduce others to perplexity is here quoted by Socrates himself.[1] At this point there follows in the *Theaetetus* the description of the art of midwifery, in the *Meno* the theory of *Anamnesis*—that all learning is the

[1] *Meno* 79E, ἤκουον . . . ὅτι σὺ οὐδὲν ἄλλο ἢ αὐτός τε ἀπορεῖς καὶ τοὺς ἄλλους ποιεῖς ἀπορεῖν. *Theaet.* 149A, λέγουσι . . . ὅτι . . . ἀτοπώτατός (ἀπορώτατος conj. Stallb.) εἰμι καὶ ποιῶ τοὺς ἀνθρώπους ἀπορεῖν.

recovery of latent knowledge always possessed by the immortal soul.[1] One of the few valuable remarks of the Anonymous Commentator is upon the equivalence of these two conceptions: 'Socrates calls himself a midwife because his method of teaching was of that kind . . . for he prepared his pupils themselves to make statements about the subject by unfolding their natural ideas and articulating them, in accordance with the doctrine that what is called learning is really recollection, and that every human soul has had a vision of reality, and needs, not to have knowledge put into it, but to recollect' (on 149A). There is some evidence that the historic Socrates professed the art of a spiritual midwife [2]; but Anamnesis appears first in the middle group of dialogues and provides the link between two Platonic doctrines: the eternal nature of the human soul and the 'separate' existence of Forms, the proper objects of knowledge. The probable inference is that Anamnesis was a theory which squared the profession and practice of Socrates with Plato's discovery of the separately existing Forms and his conversion from Socratic agnosticism to a belief in immortality.

Now the *Theaetetus* will later have much to say about memory. Why is there no mention of that peculiar impersonal memory of knowledge possessed before birth? There is no ground for supposing that Plato ever abandoned the theory of Anamnesis. It cannot be mentioned in the *Theaetetus*, because it presupposes that we know the answer to the question here to be raised afresh: What is the nature of knowledge and of its objects? For the same reason all mention of the Forms is, so far as possible, excluded. The dialogue is concerned only with the lower kinds of cognition, our awareness of the sense-world and judgments involving the perception of sensible objects. Common sense might maintain that, if this is not all the 'knowledge' we possess, whatever else can be called knowledge is somehow extracted from such experience. The purpose of the dialogue is to examine and reject this claim of the sense-world to furnish anything that Plato will call 'knowledge'. The Forms are excluded in order that we may see how we can get on without them; and the negative conclusion of the whole discussion means that, as Plato had taught ever since the discovery of the Forms, without them there is no knowledge at all.

The Marks of Knowledge.—The Greek word for 'knowledge', like the English, can mean either the faculty of knowing or that which is known. The problem here is to define the faculty or function of knowing, though it cannot be defined without reference

[1] On *Anamnesis*, see Introd., p. 2. [2] Aristophanes, *Clouds* 137.

to its objects. If we are to decide whether sensation or perception or belief is to be called knowledge or not, we must assume certain marks that any candidate for the title must possess. As Plato argues elsewhere,[1] it is a question partly of the inherent qualities of our state of mind, partly of the nature of the objects, and from differences in the state of mind differences in the objects can be inferred. In *Republic* V this is applied to the contrast between Knowledge (γνῶσις) and Opinion (δόξα), in the wide sense which covers all acquaintance with sensible things and judgments about them. The states of mind differ in that knowledge is *infallible*, whereas opinion may be true or false. It is inferred that the objects of knowledge must be completely *real* and unchanging, while the objects of opinion are not wholly real and are mutable.

So here, these two marks of knowledge are assumed at the outset. Socrates will point out that Theaetetus' identification of perception with knowledge means that perception is *infallible* and has the *real* for its object (152C). Hence what the dialogue proves is that neither sense-perception nor judgment (δόξα) of the types considered possesses both these marks. We shall find that perception, although with due qualifications it may be called infallible, has not the real for its object.

The discussion falls into three main parts, in which the claims of (I) Perception, (II) True Opinion or Belief, (III) True Belief accompanied by an 'account' or explanation of some kind, are examined and rejected.

I. The Claim of Perception to be Knowledge

151D–E. *Theaetetus identifies knowledge with perception*

Plato naturally starts with the position of common sense, that knowledge comes to us from the external world through the senses. In his own view this is the lowest type of cognition; he works upwards from beneath towards the world of intelligible objects, so as to see whether we can find knowledge at these lower levels without having to cross the boundary between the sensible and the intelligible.

151D. Theaet. Well, Socrates, with such encouragement from a person like you, it would be a shame not to do one's best to say what one can. It seems to me that one who
E. knows something is perceiving the thing he knows, and, so far as I can see at present, knowledge is nothing but perception.

Socr. Good; that is the right spirit in which to express

[1] *Rep.* V, 477 ff.

151E. one's opinion. But now suppose we examine your offspring together, and see whether it is a mere wind-egg or has some life in it. Perception, you say, is knowledge?
THEAET. Yes.

The Meaning of 'Perception'.—In ordinary usage *aesthesis*, translated 'perception', has a wide range of meanings, including sensation, our awareness of outer objects or of facts,[1] feelings, emotions, etc. At 156B the term is said to cover perceptions (sight, hearing, smell), sensations of heat and cold, pleasures and pains, and even emotions of desire and fear. All these are seated in the sentient part of the soul, inseparably associated with the body.[2] Theaetetus' words, 'one who knows *something* is perceiving the thing he knows', suggest that he is chiefly thinking of perception of external objects, and the criticism which follows narrows down the word to that sense or at least treats sense-perception of external objects as typical of all *aesthesis*. The only case analysed is vision.

151E–152C. *Dialectical combination of Theaetetus' position with Protagoras' doctrine*

Socrates at once starts upon the dialectical treatment of Theaetetus' suggestion. 'Dialectical' has some implications which may escape the modern reader. He will readily understand that dialectic means a co-operative inquiry carried on in conversation between two or more minds that are equally bent, not on getting the better of the argument, but on arriving at the truth. A tentative suggestion ('*hypothesis*') put forward by one speaker is corrected and improved until the full meaning is clearly stated. The criticism that follows may end in complete rejection or lead on to another suggestion which (if the examination has been skilfully conducted) ought to approach nearer to the truth.[3] In the present instance three successive suggestions will be made, and all will be rejected.

A less familiar feature of dialectic is the treatment of current

[1] Aristotle, *Politics* 1276A, 29: Babylon was so huge that when the city fell, it was three days before some of the inhabitants *became aware* of the event (αἰσθέσθαι). At *de anima*, 427A, 19, Aristotle remarks that thinking and the exercise of intelligence are commonly regarded as 'a sort of perception', for in both the soul discerns and becomes acquainted with something that exists.

[2] *Timaeus* 42A.

[3] Cf. *Theaet.* 187B, where Socrates, after Theaetetus' first definition of knowledge has been rejected, says: 'Blot out all we have been saying and see if you can get a clearer view from the position you have now reached. Tell us once more what knowledge is.'

views, whether popular or philosophic. Aristotle regularly begins his treatises with a review of received opinions, proceeding on the avowed assumption that any belief accepted by common sense or put forward by wise men is likely to contain some measure of truth, however faultily expressed. It is the business of dialectic, by sympathetic comparison and criticism, to elicit these contributions and to make the best that can be made of them. It is here that a modern reader is likely to be misled. He will expect a philosopher who criticises another philosopher to feel himself bound by the historical question, what that other philosopher actually meant. But neither Plato nor Aristotle is writing the history of philosophy ; rather they are philosophising and concerned only to obtain what light they can from any quarter. We can never assume, as a matter of course, that the construction they put upon the doctrines of other philosophers is faithful to historic fact.

Plato's procedure here is a classic example of dialectical method. The first object is to bring to light the full meaning of the bare statement that perception is knowledge. This is accomplished in the first section of the argument ending (160E) with the remark that Theaetetus' child has now been brought to birth. Socrates also says that, in the course of elucidation, Theaetetus' identification of perception with knowledge ' has turned out to coincide ' with the Heracleitean doctrine that all things are in motion and the Protagorean dictum that man is the measure of all things. What has really happened is that Plato has given an account of the nature of perception which involves elements taken from Protagoras and Heracleitus—elements that Plato himself accepts as true when they are guarded and limited with the necessary qualifications. Protagoras and Heracleitus, in fact, are handled as if they were parties to the discussion who could be laid under contribution.[1] Having adopted these elements of truth, Plato will be free, in the subsequent criticism, to point out what he will not accept from Protagoras and the extreme Heracleiteans.

151E. SOCR. The account you give of the nature of knowledge
152. is not, by any means, to be despised. It is the same that was given by Protagoras, though he stated it in a somewhat different way. He says, you will remember, that ' man is the measure of all things—alike of the being of things that are and of the not-being of things that are not '. No doubt you have read that.

[1] Compare Socrates' proposal to ' follow up ' the meaning of Protagoras' saying (ἐπακολουθήσωμεν αὐτῷ 152B) with Aristotle, *Met.* 985A, 4 : ' If we were to follow out (ἀκολουθοίη) Empedocles' view and interpret it according to its meaning and not to its lisping expression, we should find . . .'

152. THEAET. Yes, often.

SOCR. He puts it [1] in this sort of way, doesn't he?—that any given thing 'is to me such as it appears to me, and is to you such as it appears to you,' you and I being men.

THEAET. Yes, that is how he puts it.

B. SOCR. Well, what a wise man says is not likely to be nonsense. So let us follow up his meaning. Sometimes, when the same wind is blowing, one of us feels chilly, the other does not; or one may feel slightly chilly, the other quite cold.

THEAET. Certainly.

SOCR. Well, in that case are we to say that the wind in itself is cold or not cold? Or shall we agree with Protagoras that it is cold to the one who feels chilly, and not to the other?

THEAET. That seems reasonable.

SOCR. And further that it so 'appears' to each of us?

THEAET. Yes.

SOCR. And 'appears' means that he 'perceives' it so? [2]

THEAET. True.

C. SOCR. 'Appearing',[3] then, is the same thing as 'perceiving', in the case of what is hot or anything of that kind. They *are* to each man such as he *perceives* them.

THEAET. So it seems.

SOCR. Perception, then, is always of something that *is*, and, as being knowledge, it is infallible.

THEAET. That is clear.

The main point here is stated in Socrates' last speech. 'Perception is knowledge' means that perception is an *infallible* apprehension of what *is*, or is *real*. These are the two marks of knowledge, which any candidate to the title must possess.

Theaetetus' statement, so interpreted, certainly does not exhaust the meaning of Protagoras' saying. Protagoras' word 'appears' was not confined to what appears *real* to me in sense-perception; it included, as we shall see later, what appears *true* to me, what I

[1] *λέγει* can mean 'say' or 'mean'. Since *Crat.* 386A repeats the formula in almost the same words, it may well be a quotation.

[2] Ast's conjecture '*αἰσθάνεται*' for *αἰσθάνεσθαι* is confirmed by the Berlin papyrus (Diels, *Vors.*[4] ii, 228). Cf. 164B, *τὸ δέ γε 'οὐχ ὁρᾷ' 'οὐκ ἐπίσταταί' ἐστιν*.

[3] *φαντασία* is simply the substantive corresponding to the verb *φαίνεσθαι*, as at *Soph.* 264A (p. 319). We can substitute Theaetetus' word *αἰσθάνεται* for Protagoras' word *φαίνεται* without change of meaning.

think or judge to be true.[1] On that point Plato will part company with Protagoras; but here, as the qualification 'in the case of what is hot or anything of that kind' indicates, we are taking only the relevant application of the doctrine to the immediate perception of sensible qualities.

So far as the infallibility of such perception is concerned, we shall see that Theaetetus, Protagoras, and Plato are in agreement. The second claim—that what appears to me in perception 'is', or exists, or is real—is at present ambiguous and obscure. Protagoras is represented as asserting that when the wind appears cold to me, then it is cold *to me*, however it may appear and be *to you*. Neither of us has any ground for saying that the other is wrong. Each is the sole measure or criterion or judge[2] of the existence or reality *for him* of what he perceives. What remains obscure is the meaning of the addition '*to me*' or '*for me*'. It is probable that Protagoras actually meant something different from the construction put upon the phrase by Plato for his own purpose.

Socrates, in his illustration from the wind, introduces a distinction between what may be called the sense-object and the physical object. There are two different sense-objects, the coolness that appears to me and the warmth that appears to you. There is one physical object, 'the same wind' that is blowing. How are the two sense-objects related to the single physical object? Socrates asks whether the wind in itself is cold or not. Did Protagoras think that the cold and the warmth were qualities (or perhaps rather 'things') both residing in a neutral or public physical object, the wind in itself? The answer suggested by Socrates as Protagorean is that the wind is cold *to him who feels chilly*, but not to the other. This is open to several interpretations. The ambiguity may be intentional. It would be entirely in accordance with dialectical procedure that Plato should ignore what Protagoras actually meant and adopt such a construction of his words as would contribute to his own analysis of sense-perception.[3] Two possible interpretations are as follows.

(1) *The wind in itself is both warm and cold.* 'Warm' and 'Cold' are two properties which can co-exist in the same physical object. I perceive the one, you perceive the other. 'The wind is cold *to me*' means that the cold is the property that appears to me or

[1] Diog. L. ix, 15: 'Protagoras held that the mind consists solely of the senses.' This is probably a false inference from our passage, to which Diogenes refers.

[2] At 178B Plato uses the word κριτήριον, and at 160C κρίτης.

[3] So the Anonymous Commentator: 'Plato himself knew that Protagoras' opinion about knowledge was not the same as Theaetetus' Hence the words *Κινδυνεύεις . . . τὰ αὐτὰ ταῦτα*' (151E).

affects me, though it is not the property that appears to or affects you. To say simply that 'the wind is cold' would naturally be taken to imply that it was not warm. But in fact it is both; so we add 'to me', meaning that I am aware of that property, though you are aware of the other.

(2) *The wind in itself is neither warm nor cold.* It has neither of the properties we severally perceive and is not itself perceptible; it is something that exists outside us and originates my feeling of cold and yours of warmth. Our sense-objects, the warm and the cold, do not exist independently in the public physical object, but only come into existence when the act of perceiving them takes place. 'The wind is cold *to me*' means that it is not cold in itself apart from me, but only gives me the feeling of cold. This cold which 'appears' to me exists *for me* as a private object of perception of which I alone can be aware. The fact that your private object is different does not justify you in discrediting my perception as false or denying that its object exists, or is real.[1]

It is probable that Protagoras held the first and simpler of these two views[2]—that the wind is both warm and cold. The second view is an essential feature in the theory of perception presently to be advanced as a 'secret doctrine'—a phrase which implies that it was not to be found in Protagoras' book. The first view has not broken with the naïve realism of common sense, which does not doubt that objects have the qualities we perceive. It agrees with the doctrine of Protagoras' contemporary Anaxagoras, who taught that opposite qualities (or things) such as 'the hot' and 'the cold' co-exist inseparably in things outside us, and that perception is by contraries. 'What is just as warm or just as cold (as the sentient organ) neither warms nor cools on its approach; we do not become

[1] Professor Taylor (*Plato, the Man and his Work*, 1926, p. 326) thinks that the view Plato ascribes to Protagoras 'denies that there is a *common* real world which can be known by two percipients. Reality itself is individual in the sense that I live in a private world known only to me, you in another private world known only to you. Thus if I say the wind is unpleasantly hot and you that it is disagreeably chilly, we both speak the truth, for each of us is speaking of a "real" wind, but of a "real" wind which belongs to that private world to which he, and only he, has access. No two of these private worlds have a single constituent in common, and that is precisely why it can be held that each of us is infallible about his own private world. Protagoras . . . denies the reality of the "common environment" presupposed by "intra-subjective intercourse".'

This interpretation seems to me much too advanced for Protagoras' date, and it contradicts the language of our passage, for it asserts that there are two real winds, both private and totally unconnected, whereas Socrates says 'when the *same wind* is blowing' and asks if '*the* wind in itself' is cold or not.

[2] Cf. Brochard, *Études de Philosophie* (Paris, 1926), Protagoras et Démocrite.

aware of the sweet or the sour by means of those qualities themselves; rather we become aware of the cold by means of the hot, of the sweet by means of the sour, according to the deficiency (in us) of any given quality; for he says they are all present in us.'[1] If Protagoras accounted for the same wind feeling cold to me and warm to you by the obvious explanation (suggested below at 158E ff.) that I am already hot, you are cold, the agreement with Anaxagoras is clear. Both, again, are at one with Heracleitus, on the point that opposites co-exist inseparably.[2] In the main fifth-century controversy, the Eastern or Ionian tradition maintained that the senses were to be trusted and that things were mixtures of the opposites apprehended by sense. The Western tradition included the Eleatics, who denied the evidence of the senses and the reality of the opposites. They influenced the Atomists, who said that the sensible opposites were 'conventional' (subjective), not properties of the 'real' atoms. Protagoras' doctrine must have been a reply to the Eleatic denial of appearances. It is probable that he would maintain that 'hot' and 'cold' could co-exist in the same real thing without any contradiction. Finally, this view is supported by Sextus[3]: 'Protagoras says that matter contains the underlying grounds of all appearances, so that matter considered as independent can be all the things that appear to all. Men apprehend different things at different times according to variations in their conditions. One in a normal state apprehends those things in matter which can appear to a normal person; a man in an abnormal state apprehends what can appear to the abnormal. The same applies to different times of life, to the states of sleeping or waking, and to every sort of condition. So man proves, according to him, to be the criterion of what exists: everything that appears to man also exists; what appears to no man does not exist.' If Protagoras held this view, his doctrine was not 'subjectivist', and even the term 'relativism' is dangerously misleading. For him both the sense-objects exist independently of any percipient. The hot and the cold, together with any other properties we can perceive in the wind, would constitute 'the wind in itself'. Since at this date such properties were regarded as 'things', not as qualities needing some other 'thing' to possess and support them, Protagoras would deny that the wind was anything more

[1] Theophrastus, *de Sensu* 28 (on Anaxagoras).

[2] Sextus, *Pyrrh. Hyp.* ii, 63: 'Because honey seems bitter to some, sweet to others, Democritus said it is neither sweet nor sour, Heracleitus that it was both.'

[3] *Pyrrh. Hyp.* i, 218. Sextus was no doubt influenced by the *Theaetetus*, but appears to have had independent sources also.

than the sum of these properties, which alone appear to us. 'What appears to no man does not exist.'

The conclusion is that the second view, presently to be formulated the wind in itself is neither warm nor cold till it meets with a percipient is a construction put by Plato himself on Protagoras' ambiguous statement. By a legitimate extension of the historic doctrine, Plato adapts it to the theory he intends to attribute to the 'more refined' thinkers.

152c–153d. *Dialectical combination with the Heracleitean doctrine of Flux*

Plato next introduces another element required for his theory of sense-perception. It is drawn from Heracleitus: 'All things are in motion.' The suggestion that Protagoras taught this as a 'secret doctrine' to his 'pupils' would deceive no one. Protagoras had no school; anyone could attend his lectures and read his books. Plato is hinting that the doctrine of universal flux is really drawn from another quarter, and he goes on to attribute it to Homer and all philosophers except Parmenides. There is no more ground here for inferring that Protagoras was a Heracleitean than for inferring that Homer was one. Plato's intention is to accept from Heracleitus the doctrine that all sensible objects are perpetually changing—a fundamental principle of his own philosophy. But to Plato sensible objects are not 'all things'. He will later point out that the unrestricted assertion, 'All things are always changing', makes knowledge impossible.

152c. Socr. Can it be, then, that Protagoras was a very ingenious person who threw out this dark saying for the benefit of the common herd like ourselves, and reserved the truth as a secret doctrine to be revealed to his disciples?[1]

d. Theaet. What do you mean by that, Socrates?

Socr. I will tell you; and indeed the doctrine is a remarkable one. It declares that nothing is *one* thing just by itself, nor can you rightly call it by some definite name, nor even say it is of any definite sort. On the contrary, if you call it 'large', it will be found to be also small; if 'heavy', to be also light; and so on all through, because nothing is *one* thing or *some* thing or of any definite sort. All the things we are pleased to say 'are', really are in process of becoming, as a result of movement and change and of blending one

[1] *Truth* was the title of Protagoras' book which opened with the famous saying. At 160a Socrates again suggests, ironically, that this Truth may have been speaking in cryptic oracles.

152E. with another.[1] We are wrong to speak of them as 'being', for none of them ever is; they are always becoming. In this matter let us take it that, with the exception of Parmenides, the whole series of philosophers agree—Protagoras, Heracleitus, Empedocles—and among the poets the greatest masters in both kinds, Epicharmus[2] in comedy, Homer in tragedy. When Homer speaks of 'Oceanus, source of the gods, and mother Tethys',[3] he means that all things are the offspring of a flowing stream of change. Don't you understand him so?

THEAET. Certainly.

153. SOCR. Who, then, could challenge so great an array, with Homer for its captain, and not make himself a laughing-stock?

THEAET. That would be no light undertaking, Socrates.

SOCR. It would not, Theaetetus. Their doctrine that 'being' (so-called) and 'becoming' are produced by motion, 'not-being' and perishing by rest, is well supported by such proofs as these[4]: the hot or fire, which generates and controls all other things, is itself generated by movement and friction—both forms of change. These are ways of producing fire, aren't they?

B. THEAET. Yes.

SOCR. And further, all living things are born by the same processes?[5]

THEAET. Assuredly.

SOCR. Again, the healthy condition of the body is undermined by inactivity and indolence, and to a great extent preserved by exercise and motion, isn't it?

THEAET. Yes.

SOCR. And so with the condition of the soul. The soul acquires knowledge and is kept going and improved by learning and practice, which are of the nature of movements. By

[1] The Ionian doctrine that things are mixtures of opposites, considered as things that can be blended in various proportions. This figures in Empedocles as the composition of complex substances by the juxtaposition of opposed elements. Hence Empedocles is included below, though he did not hold the Flux doctrine.

[2] Epicharmus, *frag.* 2 (Diels), *ἐν μεταλλαγῇ δὲ πάντες ἐντὶ πάντα τὸν χρόνον*, κτλ.

[3] Quoted *Crat.* 402B, with Orphic verses and Hesiod.

[4] The proofs may be borrowed from the later Heracleitean literature, and partly, perhaps, from medical writers under Heracleitean influence. Cf. [Hippocrates] *de victu* 1.

[5] Was Plato's source acquainted with the primitive analogy, frequently noted by anthropologists, between the sexual act and the use of the fire-drill?

153b. inactivity, dullness, and neglect of exercise, it learns nothing
c. and forgets what it has learnt.

THEAET. True.

SOCR. So, of the two, motion is a good thing for both soul and body, and immobility is bad.

THEAET. So it appears.

SOCR. Need I speak further of such things as stagnation in air or water, where stillness causes corruption and decay, when motion would keep things fresh; or, to complete the argument, press into its service that 'golden rope' in
d. Homer,[1] proving that he means by it nothing more nor less than the sun, and signifies that so long as the heavens and the sun continue to move round, all things in heaven and earth are kept going; whereas if they were bound down and brought to a stand, all things would be destroyed and the world, as they say, turned upside down?

THEAET. I agree with your interpretation, Socrates.

In this Heracleitean doctrine two propositions may be distinguished.

(1) The first is essential to the Heracleitean harmony of opposites: No contrary can exist apart from its own contrary. This is the meaning here given to the statement that 'nothing is one thing just by itself'. You cannot give it the name of any contrary, such as 'large' or 'heavy', without also calling it 'small' or 'light'. Plato makes this 'blending of opposites' characteristic of the particular things of sense. Thus at *Rep.* 479A ff. against the lover of appearances who believes only in the many beautiful things, not in Beauty itself, it is urged that there is no one beautiful thing that will not also appear ugly, and that large or heavy things have no better claim to be so called than to be called small or light. This inseparability of opposites was, as we saw, held also by Protagoras, if it is true that he regarded the wind in itself as both hot and cold. Here is the real point of contact between Protagoras, Heracleitus, and Plato.

(2) The second proposition is: All the things we speak of as having 'being', never really '*are*', but are always in process of becoming, as the result of motion. There is no obvious reason why Protagoras should hold this, any more than Anaxagoras did.[2] But

[1] Socrates, in the vein of sophistic interpretation of the poets, misuses the passage where Zeus challenges the gods to see if they can drag him down by a golden rope. If he chose to pull his hardest, he could drag them all up with earth and sea as well. *Iliad* viii, 18 ff.

[2] Sextus indeed (*Pyrrh. Hyp.* i, 217 = *Vors.* 74A, 14) says Protagoras held that 'matter is in flux' (τὴν ὕλην ῥευστὴν εἶναι), and as it flows waste is

as applied to sensible things, Plato accepted the Heracleitean thesis.[1] The real being of intelligible objects is always the same, never admitting any kind of modification ; but the many things perceived by sense never remain in the same condition in any respect.[2] This principle Plato now builds into his doctrine of sense-perception. The effect is to modify Protagoras' statement, ' I am the measure of what *is* ; what appears to me *is* to me '. For this ' *is* ' we now substitute ' becomes '. In the sphere of perception I am the measure of what becomes, but never is ; and the Protagorean claim (152C) that ' perception is always of what *is* ' gives place to the Platonic doctrine : Perception is always of what is in process of becoming.

153D–154B. *Preliminary account of the nature of sense-objects and percipients*

The next step is to give a precise meaning to the words ' for me ' or ' to me ' in the Protagorean formula, ' What appears to me is *for me* or *to me* ', and the Platonic formula, ' What I perceive becomes *for me* or *to me* '. The interpretation now to be given is : The quality I perceive (my sense-object) becomes or arises at the moment when it is perceived and only *for* a single percipient ; it has no enduring independent existence in the physical object at other times. Here again, if we are right, Plato is going beyond Protagoras.

153D. SOCR. Think of it, then, in this way. First, to take the case of the eyes, you must conceive that what you call white colour has no being as a distinct thing outside your eyes nor yet inside them, nor must you assign it any fixed place. Other-
E. wise, of course, it would have its being in an assigned place and abide there, instead of arising in a process of becoming.
THEAET. Well, but how am I to think of it ?
SOCR. Let us follow out our recent statement and lay it down that there is no single thing that is in and by itself.[3]

repaired by additions and our sensations are modified according to various times of life and bodily conditions. This may mean no more than the constant waste *in our bodies* repaired by nutrition (cf. *Symp.* 207D), an alternation of hunger and repletion which would modify the pleasures of eating. Sextus' source is unknown. He may have been misled by Socrates' dialectical inclusion of Protagoras among the adherents of the Flux doctrine (152E).

[1] Ar., *Met.* A 6,987*a*, 32 : ' For having in his youth first become familiar with Cratylus and with the Heraclitean doctrines (that all sensible things are ever in a state of flux and there is no knowledge about them), these views he held even in later years ' (Ross trans.).

[2] *Phaedo* 78D.

[3] This rather bare and obscure statement here receives a new meaning At 152D ἓν μὲν αὐτὸ καθ' αὑτὸ οὐδέν ἐστιν meant that no quality (contrary) exists *without its contrary*. This was compatible with the independent existence of qualities. Now μηδὲν αὐτὸ καθ' αὑτὸ ἓν ὄν means (as again at

153E. On that showing we shall see that black or white or any colour you choose is a thing that has arisen out of the meeting of our eyes with the appropriate motion. What we say ' is '
154. this or that colour will be neither the eye which encounters the motion nor the motion which is encountered, but something which has arisen between the two and is peculiar to each several percipient. Or would you be prepared to maintain that every colour appears to a dog or any other creature just such as it appears to you?

THEAET. Certainly not.

SOCR. Or to another man? Does anything you please appear to him such as it appears to you? Are you quite sure of that? Are you not much rather sure that it does not even appear the same to yourself, because you never remain in the same condition?

THEAET. I think that is much nearer the mark.

This preliminary statement, explaining what is meant by ' becomes for me ', will be expanded presently. So far, a number of points have been very briefly stated. On the side of the object, white colour has no permanent being anywhere; it arises between the sense-organ and the physical object when they encounter. Also, it is peculiar to the individual percipient in two ways: my sense-object is *private* to me in that no one else can see just what I see, and *peculiar* in that no two people, looking at the same thing, will see precisely similar colours; nor will even the same person at different moments, because the condition of his sense-organ will be always varying.

The above statements refer mainly to the object of perception. It remains to be added that the subject (which at this stage is identified with the sense-organ, not the mind) must equally have no fixed qualities. If it carried permanent qualities of its own, it could not adapt itself to each new object; those inherent qualities would obstruct the required modification of the organ.

154B. SOCR. So then, if the thing that we measure ourselves against or the thing we touch really were large or white or hot, it would never become different the moment it encountered a different person, supposing it to undergo no change in itself. And again, if the thing which measures itself against the object or touches it were any one of these things (large, white, etc.), then, when a different thing

156E, 8 and 157A, 8) that no thing just by itself (i.e. *apart from a percipient*) has, existing in it, any single quality that we perceive. All such qualities arise between it and the percipient at the moment of perception.

154B. came into contact with it or were somehow modified, it, on its side, if it were not affected in itself, would not become different.

The expression 'measure ourselves against' looks at first sight like a reference to Protagoras' use of the word in 'Man is the *measure* of all things'. 'Measure' suggests a constant standard of reference; a measure which itself perpetually varied would be useless. But in the present case the subject is no more constant than the object, and the common implication of constancy must be ruled out. The sense-organ is undergoing perpetual modification no less than the external object, and its fluidity offers no obstruction to any fresh affection from without. It appears, however, in the next section that the literal measurement of a large thing against a small is intended.

154B–155D. *Some puzzles concerning size and number*

If Socrates now proceeded at once to the fuller statement of the theory of sense perception, there would be no difficulty. But here Plato interpolates some alleged puzzles about what we call 'relations' of size and number, whose relevance to their context is by no means obvious. Nor is it easy for us to understand why anyone should be perplexed by them.

154B. SOCR. (*continues*). For as things are,[1] we are too easily led into making statements which Protagoras and anyone who maintains the same position would call strange and absurd.
THEAET. How so? What statements do you mean?
C. SOCR. Take a simple example, which will make my meaning quite clear. When you compare six dice with four, we say that the six are more than the four or half as many again; while if you compare them with twelve, the six are fewer—only half as many—and one cannot say anything else. Or do you think one can?
THEAET. Certainly not.
SOCR. Well then, suppose Protagoras or somebody else asks you: Can anything become larger or more otherwise than by being increased? What will you answer?
THEAET. I should answer No, if I were to speak my mind
D. with reference to this last question; but having regard to your previous one, I might reply Yes, to guard against contradicting myself.

[1] 'As things are' (*νῦν*) apparently means 'on the current assumption, which has just been denied, that things have permanent qualities'.

154D. SOCR. An excellent answer; really, you might be inspired. But apparently, if you say Yes, it will be like the situation in Euripides: the tongue will be incontrovertible, but not the heart.

THEAET. True.

SOCR. Now, if you and I were like those clever persons who have canvassed all the thoughts of the heart, we might
E. allow ourselves the luxury of trying one another's strength in a regular sophistical set-to, with a great clashing of arguments. But being only ordinary people, we shall prefer first to study the notions we have in our own minds and find out what they are and whether, when we compare them, they agree or are altogether inconsistent.

THEAET. I should certainly prefer that.

SOCR. So do I; and, that being so, suppose we look at the question again in a quiet and leisurely spirit, not with
155. any impatience but genuinely examining ourselves to see what we can make of these apparitions that present themselves to our minds. Looking at the first of them, I suppose we shall assert that nothing can become greater or less, either in size or in number, so long as it remains equal to itself. Is it not so?

THEAET. Yes.

SOCR. And secondly, that a thing to which nothing is added and from which nothing is taken away is neither increased nor diminished, but always remains the same in amount.

THEAET. Undoubtedly.

B. SOCR. And must we not say, thirdly, that a thing which was not at an earlier moment cannot be at a later moment without becoming and being in process of becoming?

THEAET. It certainly seems so.

SOCR. Now these three admissions, I fancy, fight among themselves in our minds when we make those statements about the dice; or when we say that I, being of the height you see, without gaining or losing in size, may within a year be taller (as I am now) than a youth like you, and
C. later on be shorter, not because I have lost anything in bulk, but because you have grown. For apparently I am later what I was not before, and yet have not become so; for without the process of becoming the result is impossible, and I could not be in process of becoming shorter without losing some of my bulk. I could give you countless other examples, if we are to accept these. For I think you

155C. follow me, Theaetetus; I fancy, at any rate, such puzzles are not altogether strange to you.

THEAET. No; indeed it is extraordinary how they set me wondering whatever they can mean. Sometimes I get quite dizzy with thinking of them.

D. SOCR. That shows that Theodorus was not wrong in his estimate of your nature. This sense of wonder is the mark of the philosopher. Philosophy indeed has no other origin, and he was a good genealogist who made Iris the daughter of Thaumas.[1]

What is the point of these alleged puzzles? Though Socrates continues: 'Do you begin to understand why these things are so, according to the doctrine we are attributing to Protagoras?' nothing more is said about them in the following context, which analyses the process of sense-perception. Socrates leaves Theaetetus —and us—to think out these puzzles for ourselves.

We have just been told that sensible qualities like 'white' and 'hot' have no independent and permanent existence either in objects outside us or in our sense-organs. They arise or 'become' between object and organ when the two encounter one another. If either object or organ carried about with it permanent qualities, this becoming could not occur. And at 154B 'large' was grouped with 'white' and 'hot', as if it were a quality on the same footing with them; just as earlier (152D) 'large' and 'small', 'heavy and light', were taken as typical of all contraries.

The puzzle about the dice is this: When we compare six dice with four, we say that the six are *more*. At another moment, when we compare them with twelve, we say they are *less*. Yet the six dice have not increased or diminished in number. Common sense, we are told, holds that nothing can be at one moment what it was not at another, without becoming; that a thing cannot become greater or less so long as it remains the same in amount; and that it does remain the same in amount, so long as nothing is added or subtracted. How, then, can the dice, which have remained the same in amount, have become less?

It is clear that the difficulty here exists only for one who thinks of 'large' as a quality residing in the thing which is larger than something else, with 'small' as the answering quality residing in the smaller thing. If that is so, then, when the large thing is

[1] The *Cratylus* connects Iris with εἴρειν (408B), and εἴρειν (λέγειν) with dialectic (398D). So Iris (philosophy) is daughter of Thaumas (wonder). Since our passage is unintelligible without the *Cratylus*, the *Theaetetus* must be the later of the two.

compared with something larger instead of something smaller, he will suppose that it has lost its quality 'large' and gained instead the quality 'small'. By suffering this internal change it will have 'become small'. He will then be puzzled when we point out that the thing has not altered in size.

Now when Plato wrote the *Phaedo*, he certainly regarded 'tallness' as an inherent property of the tall person. 'Phaedo is taller than Socrates' was analysed as implying (1) that there are two Forms, Tall and Short, of which Phaedo and Socrates severally partake; (2) that Phaedo contains an instance of Tallness (called 'the tallness *in us*'), and Socrates an instance of Shortness; (3) that neither the Forms, Tall and Short, nor their instances in us can change into their opposites; and consequently (4) that, if Socrates should grow and become taller than Phaedo, the instance of shortness in Socrates must either 'perish' or 'withdraw' to give place to an instance of tallness. This analysis unquestionably means that the person who becomes taller or shorter than another suffers an internal change. The example chosen lends itself to this view because 'tallness' was commonly ranked as a physical excellence, with beauty, health and strength, and as such it is mentioned earlier in the *Phaedo*.[1] Plato himself shares the ordinary view and thinks of tallness as an internal property on the same footing as 'hot' or 'white', not as standing for a *relation between* the taller person and the shorter.

Now in our passage, though he repeats his example of Socrates, who is now taller than Theaetetus, becoming shorter when Theaetetus outgrows him, he remarks that Socrates will not have changed in size. And in the case of the dice it is equally obvious that the six dice do not become more or fewer in the sense of increasing or diminishing in number. Further, he hints that light on the puzzles here is to be drawn from the theory of sense-perception, which tells us that an object can 'become white' *for* a percipient without undergoing any internal change of quality irrespective of a percipient. When we say it 'becomes white for me' we do not mean that it has lost some other colour and gained whiteness

[1] At *Phaedo* 65D, Tallness (μέγεθος), Health, Strength, are instanced as Forms, together with Just, Beautiful, Good. That μέγεθος means 'tallness' (not 'absolute magnitude' or 'mathematical magnitude') is evident from *Meno* 72D. Meno has said that excellence (ἀρετή) in a man is one thing, in a woman another. Socrates asks whether this applies to physical excellences: are health, tallness (μέγεθος), or strength different things in men and in women? Tallness and beauty are coupled at 72B, as in Homer's phrase καλός τε μέγας τε. There is no question of the absolute or mathematical magnitude of men and women. At *Phaedo* 65D tallness appears without beauty because καλόν has just before been used in its moral sense.

instead. In itself, apart from a percipient, it is neither white nor of any other colour. The change meant by 'becoming white' (for me) is not an internal exchange of qualities, but a change that occurs 'between' the object and the sense-organ. Neither of the two carries about with it a permanent property, independent of their meeting.

The inference seems to be that Plato, since writing the *Phaedo*, has given up the view that any of these qualities—hot, white, large —is an instance of a Form residing in an individual thing and perishing or withdrawing out of it when the thing changes. We are now to think of the change as falling 'between' the thing and the percipient, not inside the thing. The case of more or less in number or size may be introduced partly because it is easier to see in that case how a change can occur 'between' a thing and a percipient.[1] The six dice will *appear* more to me when I compare them with four, less when I compare them with twelve, but they have not become more or fewer in themselves. This will help us to understand how a thing can appear or become white for me, without that implying that whiteness in it has replaced some other colour.

It is not safe, however, to infer that Plato has 'abandoned Ideas (Forms) of relations', if that implies that he had drawn any clear distinction between relations and qualities. It is rather probable that he still sees no important distinction between 'large' and 'hot' or 'white'. And he nowhere explicitly states that he has abandoned Forms of both relative terms and sensible qualities.[2]

155D–157C. *Theory of the nature of Sense-perception*

Socrates now expands the analysis of the process of sense-perception, which was briefly announced before the passage on size and number.

155D. SOCR. (*continues*). Do you now begin to see the explanation of all this which follows from the theory we are attributing to Protagoras? Or is it not yet clear?
THEAET. I can't say it is yet.
SOCR. Then perhaps you will be grateful if I help you to

[1] Note that Plato's illustrations are perceptible things—dice, not abstract numbers. He is not talking about mathematical 'relations' between the numbers 4, 6, 12.

[2] The treatment by Plato and Aristotle of 'relative terms' will be further discussed below, p. 282. It is one thing to say (with Plato) that 'larger' and 'more' are relative terms because what is larger or more is always larger *than something* or more *than something* or '*in comparison with something*' (*πρός τι*), and another to say (with Campbell) that 'size and number are wholly relative'. What is number, or any number (say 7), wholly relative to?

155D. penetrate to the truth concealed in the thoughts of a man
E. —or, I should say, of men—of such distinction.[1]

THEAET. Of course I shall be very grateful.

SOCR. Then just take a look round and make sure that none of the uninitiate overhears us. I mean by the uninitiate the people who believe that nothing is real save what they can grasp with their hands and do not admit that actions or processes or anything invisible can count as real.

THEAET. They sound like a very hard and repellent sort
156. of people.[2]

SOCR. It is true, they are remarkably crude. The others, into whose secrets I am going to initiate you, are much more refined and subtle. Their first principle, on which all that we said just now depends, is that the universe really is motion and nothing else. And there are two kinds of motion. Of each kind there are any number of instances, but they differ in that the one kind has the power of acting, the other of being acted upon.[3] From the intercourse and friction of these with one another arise offspring, endless in
B. number, but in pairs of twins. One of each pair is something perceived, the other a perception, whose birth always coincides with that of the thing perceived. Now, for the perceptions we have names like 'seeing', 'hearing', 'smelling', 'feeling cold', 'feeling hot', and again pleasures and pains and desires and fears, as they are called, and so on. There are any number that are nameless, though names have been found for a whole multitude. On the other side, the brood of things perceived always comes to birth at the same moment with one or another of these—with instances
C. of seeing, colours of corresponding variety; with instances of hearing, sounds in the same way; and with all the other perceptions, the other things perceived that are akin to them. Now, what light does this story throw on what has gone before, Theaetetus? Do you see?

[1] Observe the hints that the coming theory is one that 'we are attributing' to Protagoras, and not to him alone.

[2] Like the physical bodies in whose reality they believe, with their essential property of hardness and resistance to touch.

[3] The two kinds of motion here meant are: (1) physical objects considered as agents with the power of acting upon or affecting our senses; (2) sense-organs, as patients with the capacity of being affected in the way peculiar to sensation or perception. Later (156C) both kinds are distinguished, as 'slow motions (qualitative changes) occurring in the same place', from the rapid movements which pass between them—the offspring mentioned in the next sentences.

156c. THEAET. Not very clearly, Socrates.

SOCR. Well, consider whether we can round it off. The point is that all these things are, as we were saying, in motion; but there is a quickness or slowness in their motion. The slow sort has its motion without change of place and with respect to what comes within range of it, and that is
D. how it generates offspring; but the offspring generated are quicker, inasmuch as[1] they move from place to place and their motion consists in change of place. As soon, then, as an eye and something else whose structure is adjusted to the eye come within range and give birth to the whiteness together with its cognate perception—things that would never have come into existence if either of the two had approached anything else—then it is that, as the
E. vision from the eyes and the whiteness from the thing that joins in giving birth to the colour pass in the space between, the eye becomes filled with vision and now sees, and becomes, not vision, but a seeing eye; while the other parent of the colour is saturated with whiteness and becomes, on its side, not whiteness, but a white thing, be it stock or stone or whatever else may chance to be so coloured.

And so, too, we must think in the same way of the rest—'hard', 'hot' and all of them—that no one of them has
157. any being just by itself (as indeed we said before), but that it is in their intercourse with one another that all arise in all their variety as a result of their motion; since it is impossible to have any 'firm notion' (as they say) of either what is active or what is passive in them, in any single case, as having any being.[2] For there is no such thing as an agent until it meets with a patient, nor any patient until it meets with its agent.[3] Also what meets with something and behaves as agent, if it encounters something different at another time, shows itself as patient.[4]

The conclusion from all this is, as we said at the outset, that nothing *is* one thing just by itself, but is always in
B. process of becoming for someone, and being is to be ruled

[1] Taking οὕτω δὴ (γεννώμενα) as referring forward and explained by the following clause with γὰρ. There should be a colon after ἐστίν (so Diès). But perhaps this οὕτω δὴ should be omitted, with Peipers

[2] The ambiguity of εἶναί τι is discussed below, p. 50. For τὸ ποιοῦν . . . αὐτῶν, cf. αὐτὸ τοῦτο αὐτῶν, 163B, 8.

[3] Strictly the present participles mean a thing which *is acting, is being acted on*. It is not denied that there exists beforehand something with the *power* to act or be acted on.

[4] The eyeball can be seen by another eye, the flesh touched, etc.

157B. out altogether, though, needless to say, we have been betrayed by habit and inobservance into using the word more than once only just now. But that was wrong, these wise men tell us; and we must not admit the expressions 'something' or 'somebody's' or 'mine' or 'this' or 'that' or any other word that brings things to a standstill, but rather speak, in accordance with nature, of what is 'becoming', 'being produced', 'perishing', 'changing'. For anyone who talks so as to bring things to a standstill is easily refuted. So we must express ourselves in each individual case and in speaking of an assemblage of many—

C. to which assemblage people give the name of 'man' or 'stone' or of any living creature or kind.[1]

Whose is this theory? Modern critics usually say that Socrates attributes it to 'certain unnamed thinkers', and many have proceeded to identify these with the Cyrenaics. For this there is no warrant in the text. The theory is first introduced (152C) as a secret doctrine revealed by Protagoras to his disciples. Its fundamental thesis—the flux doctrine—is then ascribed to the whole series of philosophers, with the exception of Parmenides, and to Homer and Epicharmus. At 155D it is called 'the theory we are attributing to Protagoras', and once more described as a secret 'concealed in the thoughts of a man—or rather men—of distinction'. Materialists, who identify the real with the tangible and do not reckon actions and processes as real at all, are excluded from the mystery, which reduces the tangible bodies they believe in precisely to actions and processes.[2] 'The others'[3] are more refined, and now their secret doctrine is fully revealed. 'The others' means simply the distinguished men just mentioned, Protagoras himself and all the philosophers (except Parmenides, who denied the existence of motion) and poets who recognised the flux of all things—

[1] The text is doubtful: καὶ ἕκαστον ζῷόν τε καὶ εἶδος is hard to construe. Does ἕκαστον ζῷον mean 'an individual animal', εἶδος a 'kind' of animal? What sort of 'assemblage' is meant? Perhaps a physical object considered merely as an aggregate of what are commonly regarded as its sensible qualities—all the qualities (white, hard, etc.) we should name in describing a stone that we saw. The whole theory is confined to the discussion of sensible qualities. Cf. Burnet, *G.P.* i, 241.

[2] We shall meet with the materialists again in the *Sophist* (p. 231, *infra*). Probably no particular school is directly aimed at, though the Atomists who identified the real with (essentially tangible) body would come within the condemnation.

[3] Reading ἄλλοι δὲ with Burnet at 156A, 2. But the reading does not affect my argument.

all who have been wise enough to acknowledge the reality of actions and processes. There are no ' unnamed thinkers ' to be identified ; nor is there any evidence that any Cyrenaics or other contemporaries existed who held the doctrine of sense-perception here set forth.

No one would take seriously the suggestion that this very advanced theory of the nature of perception and its objects was really taught in secret by any of the distinguished philosophers and poets. Socrates is, in fact, himself in the act of constructing it by a dialectical combination of elements borrowed, with important modifications and restrictions, from Protagoras and Heracleitus. Jackson [1] pointed out that the theory is not refuted in the sequel, but on the contrary taken as a true account of the matter, and that it is repeated elsewhere in Plato's writings. He inferred that it originated with Plato himself. There is a conclusive argument (not urged by Jackson) in favour of this inference. Plato intends to refute the claim of perception (in spite of its infallibility) to be knowledge on the ground that its objects have no real being, but are always becoming and changing and therefore cannot be known. For that purpose he is bound to give us what he believes to be a true account of the nature of those objects. It would be futile to prove that what some other individual or school, perhaps wrongly, supposed to be the nature of perception was inconsistent with its claim to yield knowledge. Accordingly he states his own doctrine and takes it as established for the purposes of the whole subsequent criticism of perception. To preserve the dramatic proprieties of dialogue, he uses the transparent device of making Socrates state it as a secret doctrine of a whole succession of wise men who notoriously had never taught anything of the kind.

Assured that the theory must be Plato's own, we may now look at it more closely. Contemporaries must have found it extremely daring. The physical objects which yield our sensations and perceptions are described as actually being ' slow motions '. No permanent quality resides in them. The only other thing we know about them is that they have the power (*δύναμις*) of acting upon our organs and (it may be added) upon one another. What we call a hot thing is a change that can make us ' feel hot ' and can make another thing we call ' cold ' hotter. This change, as opposed to locomotion, is a modification or qualitative change.[2] On the other side, the subject of perception is here treated as if it were, not the

[1] *Journal of Philology* xiii, pp. 250 ff. Burnet (*Greek Philosophy* i, 242) agrees with the attribution to Plato.

[2] This is clear from 181D and *Parm.* 138B, where it is said that the two kinds of change are locomotion (*φορά*) and qualitative change (*ἀλλοίωσις*). The conception of the *δύναμις* will be further discussed below, pp. 234 ff.

mind, but the sense-organ [1]—the eye from which issues the stream of visual 'fire' or light (called 'vision', ὄψις)—to encounter the rapid motion coming from the object. The eye which sees, or the flesh which feels, is itself a physical object which can be seen or touched, and therefore itself a qualitative change, a 'slow motion in the same place'. Thus, before the act of perception takes place, there are, on both sides, changes going on all the time in physical objects, unperceived and capable of giving rise to actual perceptions. But nothing that can properly be called an agent or patient exists until the two come within range of one another.

When they do come within range, the powers of acting and being acted upon come into play. Quick motions pass between organ and external object. A stream of visual light flows out from the eye to meet a stream of light whose structure corresponds in such a way that the two streams can interpenetrate one another and coalesce.[2] The marriage of these two motions generates seeing and colour. Physically, 'the eye becomes filled with vision'—a mixture of visual fire and the fiery particles coming from the object. The external thing 'becomes white'; its surface is 'saturated with whiteness'. This last statement is more difficult; the object is described as affected by the act of sight and acquiring colour. The meaning may be that the 'flame' or light belonging to the object cannot until this moment be called 'colour' or 'white'. At other times the object ought not to be spoken of as if it possessed in itself any quality with a fixed name.

When perception is not taking place, we are finally told, one cannot have any 'firm notion' of either agent or patient as 'having any being' or 'being any definite thing' (εἶναί τι). The last words are ambiguous. 'Being any definite thing' means having any definite quality, such as white. 'Having any being' means that there is strictly no such thing as an agent or patient *as such*: there is nothing that is acting or being acted upon, but only two things or changes with a capacity of acting and being acted upon. This capacity must imply that my pen and this paper have some difference of property when not perceived, which would explain why, when I do see them, the pen looks black, the paper white. Plato's point

[1] Later (184B) it will be pointed out that there is a central mind which perceives rather *through* than *with* the several sense-organs, but this addition does not invalidate the present account of the commerce between organs and objects.

[2] The *Timaeus* explains the process in terms of the theory which there assigns particles of regular form to each of the four elements. Colours are 'a flame streaming off any and every body, having its particles so adjusted (σύμμετρα) to those of the visual current as to excite sensation' (67C). Cf. συμμέτρων here, 156D. The coalescence is described at *Tim.* 45B ff. See p. 327.

is that these properties, whatever they are, are always changing, however slightly, and that they are not the qualities I perceive—my sense-objects—and so should not be called ' black ' or ' white '.[1]

157C–D. *Theaetetus accepts the theory of Perception*

In a short interlude, Theaetetus accepts the theory, while Socrates disclaims the authorship.

157C. SOCR. (*continues*). Does all this please you, Theaetetus? Will you accept it as palatable to your taste?

THEAET. Really, I am not sure, Socrates. I cannot even make out about you, whether you are stating this as something you believe or merely putting me to the test.

SOCR. You forget, my friend, that I know nothing of such matters and cannot claim to be producing any offspring of my own. I am only trying to deliver yours, and to that end uttering charms over you and tempting your appetite

D. with a variety of delicacies from the table of wisdom,[2] until by my aid your own belief shall be brought to light. Once that is done, I shall see whether it proves to have some life in it or not. Meanwhile, have courage and patience, and answer my questions bravely in accordance with your convictions.

THEAET. Go on with your questioning.

SOCR. Once more, then, tell me whether you like this notion that nothing is, but is always becoming, good or beautiful or any of the other things we mentioned?

THEAET. Well, when I hear you explaining it as you have, it strikes me as extraordinarily reasonable, and to be accepted as you have stated it.

The theory so accepted stands henceforth as a satisfactory account of that perception which Theaetetus has identified with knowledge. The word has now received a clearer meaning, more restricted than Theaetetus, perhaps, at first intended. He apparently feels no qualm when Socrates slips in the words ' good ' and ' beautiful ', as if these qualities were on the same footing with ' hot ' or ' white ' or ' large ', and since his identification of knowledge with perception implies that there is no knowledge other than perception, he would have no right to object.

[1] There is no question here of a ' solipsist epistemology ' or of a relativism asserting that, if every sentient creature were annihilated, nothing would exist

[2] The allusion seems to be rather to the fastidious appetite of pregnant women than to drugs, which are not ' set before ' the patient to be ' tasted of '.

157E–160E. *The claim of Perception, so defined, to be infallible*

The next section completes the case on behalf of Theaetetus' identification of knowledge with perception. At the outset Protagoras' assertion that 'what appears to each man *is* to him' was construed as meaning that what he perceives has being (at any rate 'for him') and that his perception is infallible. Plato's theory of perception has now denied that the object has 'being' apart from the percipient, and has interpreted '*is* for him' as meaning '*becomes* for him'. This interpretation, though it will finally prove fatal to the claim of perception to be knowledge of true reality, leaves untouched the claim to infallibility. Socrates, whose present business is to make the best of Theaetetus' hypothesis that perception is knowledge, now brings forward this latter claim and upholds it against the objections commonly based on so-called delusions of sense, the unreality of dream images, the vitiated sensations of the diseased, and the hallucinations of insanity.

157E. SOCR. Then let us not leave it incomplete. There remains the question of dreams and disorders, especially madness and all the mistakes madness is said to make in seeing or hearing or otherwise misperceiving. You know, of course, that in all these cases the theory we have just stated is supposed to be admittedly disproved, on the ground that in these
158. conditions we certainly have false perceptions, and that so far from its being true that what appears to any man also is, on the contrary none of these appearances is real.

THEAET. That is quite true, Socrates.

SOCR. What argument, then, is left for one who maintains that perception is knowledge, and that what appears to each man also 'is' for him to whom it appears?

THEAET. I hesitate to say that I have no reply, Socrates, because just now you rebuked me for saying that. Really,
B. I cannot undertake to deny that madmen and dreamers believe what is false, when madmen imagine they are gods or dreamers think they have wings and are flying in their sleep.

SOCR. Have you not taken note of another doubt that is raised in these cases, especially about sleeping and waking?[1]

THEAET. What is that?

SOCR. The question I imagine you have often heard asked:

[1] The reply our theory will make to dispose of the objection does not begin till 158E. Here Socrates makes a sort of preliminary answer: Who is to judge between the dreamer's conviction that his experience is real and the waking man's, that it is unreal?

158B. what evidence could be appealed to, supposing we were asked at this very moment whether we are asleep or awake
C. —dreaming all that passes through our minds or talking to one another in the waking state.

THEAET. Indeed, Socrates, I do not see by what evidence it is to be proved; for the two conditions correspond in every circumstance like exact counterparts. The conversation we have just had might equally well be one that we merely think we are carrying on in our sleep; and when it comes to thinking in a dream that we are telling other dreams, the two states are extraordinarily alike.

SOCR. You see, then, that there is plenty of room for
D. doubt, when we even doubt whether we are asleep or awake; and in fact, our time being equally divided between waking and sleeping, in each condition our mind strenuously contends that the convictions of the moment are certainly true; so that for equal times we affirm the reality of the one world and of the other, and are just as confident of both.

THEAET. Certainly.

SOCR. And the same holds true of disorders and madness, except that the times are not equal.

THEAET. That is so.

SOCR. Well, is the truth to be decided by length or shortness of time?

E. THEAET. No, that would be absurd in many ways.

SOCR. Have you any other certain test to show which of these beliefs is true?

THEAET. I don't think I have.

The word *aesthesis* is here still used in a sense wide enough to include awareness of inner sensations and feelings and of dream-images. All these are, in Protagoras' phrase, 'things that appear' to me. Since, as Socrates will point out, I cannot be aware and yet aware of nothing (160A), these objects must have some sort of existence; and there is no ground for saying that my direct awareness of them is 'false'.

It is true that Theaetetus (158B), instead of keeping to Socrates' expressions 'perceptions,' 'what appears', speaks of the dreamer and the madmen as 'thinking' (*δοξάζειν, διανοεῖσθαι*) or 'believing' (*οἴεσθαι*) what is false. This is no doubt intentional. It stirs in the reader the suggestion that, although there may be no such thing as a false awareness of sensation, there is such a thing as false belief. But the vital distinction between direct awareness and belief is not yet drawn, and Theaetetus, like most people, would

say indifferently of the dreamer that he 'has the sensation of flying', 'seems to himself to be flying', and 'imagines or believes he is flying'. When the distinction is drawn, the claim of direct awareness to be infallible is not shaken. No one can deny that the dreamer has just that experience which he does have.

After this glimpse of the distinction between sensation or perception and belief or judgment, the argument returns to the case of 'perception' and is confined to that. Socrates now disposes of the popular notion that the healthy or the sane man is the only measure of what is or appears—that wine really is in itself sweet because it seems sweet to the normal palate, sour only to the unhealthy. Since the sense-organ co-operates in producing the sensation, its condition at least partly determines the character of the sensation. The unhealthy man is not 'misperceiving' a fixed quality inherent in the external object, which the normal man perceives as it really is. The two percipient organs are different, and these differences will necessarily modify the joint product of the marriage of subject and object.

158E. SOCR. Then let me tell you what sort of account would be given of these cases by those who lay it down that whatever at any time seems to anyone is true to him. I imagine they would ask this question: 'Tell us, Theaetetus; when one thing is entirely different from another, it cannot be in any respect capable of behaving[1] in the same way as that other, can it? We are not to understand that the thing we speak of is in some respects the same though different in others, but that it is entirely different.'

159. THEAET. If so, it can have nothing in common, either in its capabilities of behaviour or in any other respect, when it is altogether different.

SOCR. Must we not admit, then, that such a thing is unlike the other?

THEAET. I agree.

SOCR. So if it happens that something comes to be like or unlike either itself or something else, we shall say that when it is made like it becomes the *same*, when unlike, *different*.

THEAET. Necessarily.

SOCR. And we said earlier that there was no limit to the number of things that are active or of things that are acted upon by them.

THEAET. Yes.

[1] By δύναμις the capacity of acting or being acted upon, mentioned at 156A, is specially meant, though the word has vaguer senses.

159. Socr. And further, that when one of these is married to a succession of different partners, the offspring produced will be not the same but different.

B. Theaet. Certainly.

Socr. Now let us take you or me or any other instance to which the principle applies—Socrates in health and Socrates ill : are we to call one of these *like* the other or unlike ?

Theaet. You mean : Is the ill Socrates taken as a whole like Socrates in health taken as a whole ?

Socr. You understand me perfectly : that is just what I mean.

Theaet. Then of course he is unlike.

Socr. And consequently, inasmuch as he is unlike, a different thing ?

Theaet. Necessarily.

C. Socr. And you would say the same of Socrates asleep or in any other of the conditions we mentioned ?

Theaet. Yes.

Socr. Then any one of the objects whose nature it is to act upon something will, according as it finds Socrates well or ill, treat me as a different thing ?

Theaet. Of course it will.

Socr. And consequently the pair of us—I who am acted upon and the thing that acts on me—will have different offspring in the two cases ?

Theaet. Naturally.

Socr. Now when I am in health and drink wine, it seems pleasant to me and sweet.

Theaet. Yes.

Socr. Because, in accordance with the account we accepted earlier, agent and patient give birth to sweetness and a

D. sensation, both movements that pass simultaneously. The sensation, on the patient's side, makes the tongue percipient, while, on the side of the wine, the sweetness, moving in the region of the wine,[1] causes it both to be and to appear sweet to the healthy tongue.

Theaet. Certainly that was what we agreed upon.

Socr. But when it finds me in ill health, to begin with, the person it finds is not really the same ; for the one it now meets with is unlike the other.

Theaet. Yes.

E. Socr. And so this pair—Socrates in this condition and the

[1] *περὶ αὐτὸν φερομένη* seems to mean, as it were, ' spreading itself over the wine ' as whiteness saturated the surface of the thing seen (156E).

159E. drinking of the wine—produce a different offspring: in the region of the tongue a sensation of sourness, and in the region of the wine a sourness that arises as a movement there. The wine becomes, not sourness, but sour; while I become, not a sensation, but sentient.

THEAET. Undoubtedly.

The assertion here that Socrates-ill is a totally different person from Socrates-well may seem fallacious. But the whole argument is confined within the limits of the earlier account of sense-perception. Socrates is for this purpose nothing more than a bundle of sense-organs. If these sense-organs are perpetually changing (as the theory maintains), then the whole of Socrates is different at any two moments. So at 166B Protagoras is made to say that we have no right to speak of a single person continuously existing, but only of an infinite number, if change of quality is always taking place, as it is on our Heracleitean premiss. Socrates is, accordingly, justified in drawing the three conclusions that follow: (1) No percipient can have the same sensation or perception twice, since both subject (organ) and object will be different; (2) No two percipients can have precisely similar sensations or perceptions from the same object; (3) Neither percipient nor sense-object can exist independently of the other. These conclusions will yield the final result, that no one can challenge the truth of my perception on the grounds that he perceives an object different from mine, and that that object is a quality which resides in the thing independently of either percipient, so that one of us must be 'misperceiving' it.

159E. SOCR. It follows, then, (1) that, on my side, I shall never become percipient in just this way of any other thing; for to a different object belongs a different perception, and in acting on its percipient it is acting on [1] a person who is in a different condition and so a different person. Also (2) on its side,

160. the thing which acts on me can never meet with someone else and generate the same offspring and come to be of just this quality; for when it brings to birth another thing from another person, it will itself come to be of another quality.

[1] *ποιεῖ* 'is acting on' (cf. *τὸ ποιοῦν ἐμὲ* in the next clause and 160C, 4), not 'makes him a different person'; it *finds* a different person, since the sense-organ is, on our Heracleitean principle, perpetually changing. The agent itself is different; so the combination of a different object and a different subject must produce a different sensation. The expression *ποιεῖν τινα* for 'doing something to a person' is a slight extension of the common usages, *εὖ ποιεῖν τινα, οὐκ οἶδ' ὅτι χρῆμά με ποιεῖς* (Ar., *Wasps* 697), *ταῦτα τοῦτον ἐποίησα* (Hdt.).

160. THEAET. That is so.

SOCR. Further, (3) I shall not come to have this sensation *for myself*,[1] nor will the object come to be of such a quality *for itself*.

THEAET. No.

SOCR. Rather, when I become percipient, I must become percipient *of something*; for I cannot have a perception and have it of nothing; and equally the object, when it

B. becomes sweet or sour and so on, must become so *to someone*: it cannot become sweet and yet sweet to nobody.

THEAET. Quite so.

SOCR. Nothing remains, then, I suppose, but that it and I should be or become—whichever expression we are to use—*for each other*; necessity binds together our existence, but binds neither of us to anything else, nor each of us to himself[2]; so we can only be bound to one another. Accordingly, whether we speak of something 'being' or of its 'becoming', we must speak of it as being or becoming *for someone*, or *of something* or *towards something*; but

C. we must not speak, or allow others to speak, of a thing as either being or becoming anything just in and by itself. That is the conclusion to which our argument points.

THEAET. Certainly, Socrates.

SOCR. And so, since what acts upon me is for me and for no one else, I, and no one else, am actually perceiving it.

THEAET. Of course.

SOCR. Then my perception is true for me; for its object at any moment is my reality,[3] and I am, as Protagoras says, a judge of what is for me, that it is, and of what is not, that it is not.

THEAET. So it appears.

D. SOCR. If, then, I am infallible and make no mistake in my state of mind about what is or becomes, how can I

[1] Without the co-operation of an object *of* which I am percipient, as the next speech explains. τοιοῦτος = οὕτως αἰσθανόμενος (159E, 7–8).

[2] i.e. neither subject nor object can produce just that sensation and quality in conjunction with any other object or subject; and neither of the two can produce offspring 'for itself' without the other.

[3] τῆς ἐμῆς οὐσίας = τῶν ἐμοὶ ὄντων, what is real for me. Socrates is here stating the claim that perception is true as having the real (τὸ ὄν) for its object, as well as its claim to infallibility, next mentioned. The weak point is that 'my reality' is in fact only 'what becomes for me', not genuinely real in Plato's sense. Note that in his next speech Socrates speaks of what 'is *or becomes*'.

160D. fail to have knowledge of the things of which I have perception?

THEAET. You cannot possibly fail.

SOCR. So you were perfectly right in saying that knowledge is nothing but perception; and it has turned out that these three doctrines coincide: the doctrine of Homer and Heracleitus and all their tribe that all things move like flowing streams; the doctrine of Protagoras, wisest of men, that Man is the measure of all things; and Theaetetus'

E. conclusion that, on these grounds, it results that perception is knowledge.

Is it not so, Theaetetus? May we say that this is your newborn child which I have brought to birth? What do you say?

THEAET. I can only agree, Socrates.

Thus Socrates claims to have brought to light the full meaning of Theaetetus' identification of knowledge with perception. The first step was to analyse the nature of perception. Plato was forced to give his own account of the process, based on the Heracleitean principle which he accepted so far as sensible things are concerned. He has also adopted Protagoras' doctrine as applied to my immediate awareness of sense-objects, including dream images and hallucinations. In this field I am the measure of what 'becomes for me' or 'appears to me'; if wine tastes sour to me, no one can say I am mistaken because the wine really is sweet in itself. So perception has one of the two marks of knowledge, infallibility. And, if we can accept Protagoras' identification of what appears to me with what is, or is real, ignoring the addition 'for me' or 'to me' and the distinction between being and becoming, the case will be complete. Socrates has, at any rate, dealt fairly with Theaetetus in making the best case for his candidate that can be made.

160E–161B. *Interlude. Criticism begins*

A short interlude marks that the first stage of the dialectical process is now complete. Socrates has drawn out the full meaning of Theaetetus' suggested definition of knowledge. The second stage, criticism, is now to begin. What follows has sometimes been misunderstood through a failure to see what the scope of the criticism precisely is.

First, it is not directed against the theory of perception as a whole, or against those elements in the theory which Plato has adopted from Heracleitus and Protagoras. If the account of the nature of perception were now to be rejected, obviously we should

not know what we were denying when we finally deny that perception is knowledge. This fabric stands unshaken. The process of perception is such as it has been described. The question is whether, being such, it possesses all the marks of knowledge.

At the same time, Plato has to explain exactly how much he has taken from Heracleitus and Protagoras, and exactly where he refuses to follow them further. The Heracleitean dogma 'All things are in motion' can be accepted if 'all things' is restricted (as it is in the theory of perception) to sensible physical objects. But there are other things—intelligible objects—to which it does not apply; and these are, for Plato, the true realities. If these were always changing, no true statement could ever be made and there could be no such thing as knowledge or discourse. Similarly, the Protagorean maxim, man the measure of all things, can be accepted if 'all things' is restricted (as our theory restricts it) to the immediate objects of our awareness in sensation or perception, in which no element of judgment is supposed to be involved. But Protagoras' phrase 'what appears to me' was not so restricted; it included what appears *true* to me, what I judge or think or believe to be true. Plato will deny that whatever I judge to be true must be true, simply, or even true *to me* or *for me*. Hence, in the following argument, criticism is directed partly against the claim of perception, as Plato has defined it, to be knowledge; partly against those elements of Heracleitean and Protagorean doctrine which go beyond what Plato has accepted.

160E. SOCR. Here at last, then, after our somewhat painful labour, is the child we have brought to birth, whatever sort of creature it may be. His birth should be followed by the ceremony of carrying him round the hearth[1]; we must look at our offspring from every angle to make sure we
161. are not taken in by a lifeless phantom not worth the rearing. Or do you think an infant of yours must be reared in any case and not exposed? Will you bear to see him put to the proof, and not be in a passion if your first-born should be taken away?

THEOD. Theaetetus will bear it, Socrates; he is thoroughly good-tempered. But do explain what is wrong with the conclusion.

SOCR. You have an absolute passion for discussion, Theodorus. I like the way you take me for a sort of bag

[1] The Amphidromia was held a few days after birth. The infant received its name and was associated with the family cult by being carried round the central hearth.

161. full of arguments, and imagine I can easily pull out a proof
B. to show that our conclusion is wrong. You don't see what is happening: the arguments never come out of me, they always come from the person I am talking with. I am only at a slight advantage in having the skill to get some account of the matter from another's wisdom and entertain it with fair treatment. So now, I shall not give any explanation myself, but try to get it out of our friend.

THEOD. That is better, Socrates; do as you say.

161B–163A. *Some objections against Protagoras*

Theodorus is here drawn into the discussion, to mark that the first objections will be made against his personal friend, Protagoras.

161B. SOCR. Well then, Theodorus, shall I tell you a thing that surprises me in your friend Protagoras?

C. THEOD. What is that?

SOCR. The opening words of his treatise. In general, I am delighted with his statement that what seems to anyone also is; but I am surprised that he did not begin his *Truth* with the words: The measure of all things is the pig, or the baboon, or some sentient creature still more uncouth. There would have been something magnificent in so disdainful an opening, telling us that all the time, while we were admiring him for a wisdom more than mortal,

D. he was in fact no wiser than a tadpole, to say nothing of any other human being. What else can we say, Theodorus? If what every man believes as a result of perception is indeed to be true for him; if, just as no one is to be a better judge of what another experiences, so no one is better entitled to consider whether what another thinks is true or false, and (as we have said more than once) every man is to have his own beliefs for himself alone and they are all right and true—then, my friend, where is the wisdom of

E. Protagoras, to justify his setting up to teach others and to be handsomely paid for it, and where is our comparative ignorance or the need for us to go and sit at his feet, when each of us is himself the measure of his own wisdom? Must we not suppose that Protagoras speaks in this way to flatter the ears of the public? I say nothing of my own case or of the ludicrous predicament to which my art of midwifery is brought, and, for that matter, this whole business of philosophic conversation; for to set about overhauling and testing one another's notions and opinions when

162. those of each and every one are right, is a tedious and monstrous display of folly, if the Truth of Protagoras is really truthful and not amusing herself with oracles delivered from the unapproachable shrine of his book.

THEOD. Protagoras was my friend, Socrates, as you were saying, and I would rather he were not refuted by means of any admissions of mine. On the other hand, I cannot resist you against my convictions; so you had better go back to Theaetetus, whose answers have shown, in any case, how well he can follow your meaning.

B. SOCR. If you went to a wrestling-school at Sparta, Theodorus, would you expect to look on at the naked wrestlers, some of them making a poor show, and not strip so as to let them compare your own figure?

THEOD. Why not, if they were likely to listen to me and not insist, just as I believe I shall persuade you to let me look on now? The limbs are stiff at my age; and instead of dragging me into your exercises, you will try a fall with a more supple youth.

SOCR. Well, Theodorus, as the proverb says, 'what likes you mislikes not me.' So I will have recourse to the

C. wisdom of Theaetetus.

Tell me, then, first, Theaetetus, about the point we have just made: are not *you* surprised that you should turn out, all of a sudden, to be every bit as wise as any other man and even as any god? Or would you say that Protagoras' maxim about the measure does not apply to gods just as much as to men?

THEAET. Certainly I think it does; and, to answer your question, I am very much surprised. When we were dis-

D. cussing what they mean by saying that what seems to anyone really is to him who thinks it so,[1] that appeared to me quite satisfactory; but now, all in a moment, it has taken on a very different complexion.

SOCR. That, my friend, is because you are young; so you lend a ready ear to clap-trap and it convinces you. Protagoras or his representative will have an answer to this. He will say: 'You good people sitting there, boys and old men together, this is all clap-trap. You drag in the gods, whose existence or non-existence I expressly refuse

E. to discuss in my speeches and writings, and you count

[1] The ambiguity of δοκεῖν, including 'what *seems*' (τὸ δοκοῦν), which might mean only perception, and 'he who *thinks*' or '*judges*' (ὁ δοκῶν), is here neatly illustrated.

162E. upon appeals to the vulgar such as this: how strange that any human individual is to be no wiser than the lowest of the brutes! You go entirely by what looks probable, without a word of argument or proof. If a mathematician like Theodorus elected to argue from probability in geometry, he wouldn't be worth an ace. So you and Theodorus might consider whether you are going to allow questions of this
163. importance to be settled by plausible appeals to mere likelihood.'

THEAET. Well, you would not think that right, Socrates, any more than we should.

SOCR. It seems, then, we must attack the question in another way. That is what you and Theodorus think.

THEAET. Certainly we must.

Socrates has brought against Protagoras two objections, which are not of equal cogency. (1) Why not 'Pig the measure of all things'? On the level of mere sensation, man has no privileged position. The pig, or the anthropomorphic god (if such a being exists), is just as much the measure of his own sensations. Plato, who confined his acceptance of the maxim to that level, would admit this. But Protagoras went beyond sensation and perception to include under 'what seems to me' what I think or judge to be true. The serious objection is: (2) 'If what every man believes as the result of perception is to be true for him', how can any man be wiser than another? Here Plato parts company with Protagoras. When we return to these objections, we shall deny that every man is the measure of the truth of his own judgments.

163A–164B. *Objections to a simple identification of Perceiving and Knowing*

Meanwhile, Protagoras having registered his protest against clap-trap, the question of judgment is dropped. Socrates turns to some preliminary criticisms of Theaetetus' proposition: Perception is knowledge. These criticisms are made here because Protagoras will be able to answer them presently in his Defence. They take 'perception', as we have now analysed it, in the strictest and narrowest sense, and point out that we shall find ourselves in curious difficulties if we assert that such perception is the only form of knowledge. The objections are later called captious or 'eristic', not because they are invalid, but because they take Theaetetus' statement more literally than he intended. They serve a purpose by calling attention to various meanings of the

word 'know' (*ἐπίστασθαι*). (1) I am said to 'know' Syriac[1] when I *understand the meaning* of written or spoken symbols. (2) I 'know' Socrates when I have *become acquainted with* a certain person by sense-perception and possess a record of this acquaintance in *memory*. In neither of these senses can 'I know' be simply equated with 'I am perceiving'. It is necessary and fair to make Theaetetus see what a simple identification of perceiving and 'knowing' commits him to.

163A. SOCR. Let us look at it in this way, then—this question whether knowledge and perception are, after all, the same thing or not. For that, you remember, was the point to which our whole discussion was directed, and it was for its sake that we stirred up all this swarm of queer doctrines, wasn't it?

THEAET. Quite true.

B. SOCR. Well, are we going to agree that, whenever we perceive something by sight or hearing, we also at the same time know it? Take the case of a foreign language we have not learnt. Are we to say that we do not hear the sounds that foreigners utter, or that we both hear and know what they are saying? Or again, when we don't know our letters, are we to maintain that we don't see them when we look at them, or that, since we see them, we do know them?

THEAET. We shall say, Socrates, that we know just so much of them as we do see or hear. The shape and colour of the letters we both see and know; we hear and at the

C. same time know the rising and falling accents of the voice; but we neither perceive by sight and hearing nor yet know what a schoolmaster or an interpreter could tell us about them.

SOCR. Well done, Theaetetus. I had better not raise objections to that, for fear of checking your growth.[2] But look, here is another objection threatening. How are we going to parry it?

THEAET. What is that?

D. SOCR. It is this. Suppose someone to ask: 'Is it possible

[1] *Συριστὶ ἐπίστασθαι* (Xenophon), *γράμματα ἐπίστασθαι*.

[2] Socrates might object that to 'know' a language does not mean hearing unintelligible sounds or seeing black marks on paper, but to know the meaning, which we do not see or hear. But Plato does not want to embark on a discussion of what it is we know when we know the meaning of words. That would involve bringing in the Forms, which he is determined, so far as possible, to leave out of account. So the point is not pressed.

163D. for a man who has once come to know something and still preserves a memory of it, not to know just that thing that he remembers at the moment when he remembers it?' This is, perhaps, rather a long-winded way of putting the question. I mean: Can a man who has become acquainted [1] with something and remembers it, not know it?

THEAET. Of course not, Socrates; the supposition is monstrous.

SOCR. Perhaps I am talking nonsense, then. But consider: you call seeing 'perceiving', and sight 'perception', don't you?

THEAET. I do.

E. SOCR. Then, according to our earlier statement,[2] a man who sees something acquires from that moment knowledge of the thing he sees?

THEAET. Yes.

SOCR. Again, you recognise such a thing as memory?

THEAET. Yes.

SOCR. Memory of nothing, or of something?

THEAET. Of something, surely.

SOCR. Of what one has become acquainted with and perceived—that sort of things?

THEAET. Of course.

SOCR. So a man sometimes remembers what he has seen?

THEAET. He does.

SOCR. Even when he shuts his eyes? Or does he forget when he shuts them?

THEAET. No, Socrates; that would be a monstrous thing to say.

164. SOCR. All the same, we shall have to say it, if we are to save our former statement. Otherwise, it goes by the board.

THEAET. I certainly have a suspicion that you are right, but I don't quite see how. You must tell me.

SOCR. In this way. One who sees, we say, acquires knowledge of what he sees, because it is agreed that sight or perception and knowledge are the same thing.

THEAET. Certainly.

SOCR. But suppose this man who sees and acquires knowledge of what he has seen, shuts his eyes; then he remembers the thing, but does not see it. Isn't that so?

[1] *μανθάνειν* here is wider than 'learn', and equivalent to the phrase 'come to know something' (*ἐπιστήμων γενέσθαι*) above.

[2] The simple identification of perceiving with knowing, recalled at 163A.

164. THEAET. Yes.

B. SOCR. But 'does not see it' means 'does not know it', since 'sees' and 'knows' mean the same.

THEAET. True.

SOCR. Then the conclusion is that a man who has come to know a thing and still remembers it does not know it, since he does not see it; and we said that would be a monstrous conclusion.

THEAET. Quite true.

SOCR. Apparently, then, if you say that knowledge and perception are the same thing, it leads to an impossibility.

THEAET. So it seems.

SOCR. Then we shall have to say they are different.

THEAET. I suppose so.

In this argument memory first comes into sight. Remembering is a kind of knowing different from perceiving as we have analysed it. We seem to have immediate awareness of past objects not now given in the actual process of perception. If Theaetetus' definition of knowledge as perception is to be saved, 'perception' must be stretched to cover awareness of memory-objects. Since there would be no objection to that, Socrates here breaks off what threatens to become a mere dispute about words. The conclusion stands, however, that 'I know' has other meanings than 'I am (now) perceiving'. And the nature of memory will call for analysis later.

164C–165E. *Socrates undertakes to defend Protagoras*

In an interlude Socrates consents to state, on Protagoras' behalf, a reply to the criticism urged against Man the measure of all things. Incidentally, he adds another 'eristic' objection to Theaetetus' equation of perceiving with knowing.

164C. SOCR. What, then, can knowledge be? Apparently we must begin all over again. But wait a moment, Theaetetus. What are we doing?

THEAET. Doing about what?

SOCR. It seems to me we are behaving towards our theory like an ill-bred gamecock who springs away from his adversary and starts crowing over him before he is beaten.

THEAET. How so?

SOCR. It looks as if we were content to have reached an agreement resting on mere verbal consistency and to have got the better of the theory by the methods of a professional controversialist. We profess to be seeking wisdom, not

164d. competing for victory, but we are unconsciously behaving just like one of those redoubtable disputants.

THEAET. I still don't understand what you mean.

SOCR. Well, I will try to make the point clear, so far as I can see it. We were asking whether one who had become acquainted with something and remembered it could fail to know it. Then we pointed out that a man who shuts his eyes after seeing something, remembers but does not see; and so concluded that at the same moment he both remembers the thing and does not know it. That, we said, was impossible. And so no one was left to tell Protagoras' tale [1], or yours either, about knowledge and perception being the same thing.

e. THEAET. So it appears.

SOCR. I fancy it would be very different if the author of the first story were still alive. He would have put up a good fight for his offspring. But he is dead, and here are we trampling on the orphan. Even its appointed guardians, like Theodorus here, will not come to the rescue. However, we will step into the breach ourselves and see that it has fair play.

THEOD. In point of fact, Socrates, it is rather Callias, son
165. of Hipponicus,[2] who is Protagoras' trustee. My own inclinations diverted me at rather an early age from abstract discussions to geometry. All the same, I shall be grateful for any succour you can give him.

SOCR. Very good, Theodorus. You shall see what my help will amount to. For one might commit oneself to even stranger conclusions, if one were as careless in the use of language as we commonly are in our assertions and denials. Am I to enlarge upon this to you or to Theaetetus?

THEOD. To the company in general; but let the younger man answer your questions. It will not be such a disgrace

b. to him to be caught tripping.

SOCR. Let me put, then, the most formidable poser of all, which I take to be this: Can the same person know something and also not know that which he knows?

THEOD. Well, Theaetetus, what are we to answer?

THEAET. That it is impossible, I suppose.

SOCR. Not if you say that seeing is knowing. How are you going to deal with a question that leaves no loophole,

[1] A proverbial expression.

[2] A wealthy amateur of sophistry, who had entertained Protagoras on his visit to Athens.

165B. when you are trapped like a beast in a pit and an imperturbable gentleman puts his hand over one of your eyes and asks
C. if you can see his coat with the eye that is covered?
THEAET. I suppose I should say: No, not with that one, but I can with the other.
SOCR. So you both see and do not see the same thing at the same time?
THEAET. Yes, in a sort of way.
SOCR. Never mind about the sort of way, he will reply; that was not the question I set you, but whether, when you know a thing, you also do not know it. In this instance you are obviously seeing something you don't see, and you have agreed that seeing is knowing and not seeing is not knowing. Now draw your conclusion. What is the consequence?
D. THEAET. Well, I conclude that the consequence contradicts my thesis.
SOCR. Yes, and you might have been reduced to the same condition by a number of further questions: whether knowing can be keen or dim; whether you can know from close at hand what you cannot know from a distance, or know the same thing with more or less intensity. A mercenary skirmisher in the war of words might lie in wait for you armed with a thousand such questions, once you have identified knowledge and perception. He would make his assaults upon hearing and smelling and suchlike senses and put you
E. to confusion, sustaining his attack until your admiration of his inestimable skill betrayed you into his toils; and thereupon, leading you captive and bound, he would hold you to ransom for such a sum as you and he might agree upon.[1]

And now, perhaps, you may wonder what argument Protagoras will find to defend his position. Shall we try to put it into words?
THEAET. By all means.

The 'most formidable' objection here added is, like the earlier ones, valid against Theaetetus' position, since he has accepted the account of perception as the commerce between a sense-organ and an external object. If that is what perception is, then to identify it with knowledge does lead to these absurdities. The objections

[1] Protagoras, if a pupil objected to the fee he charged, made him swear in a temple how much he thought what he had learnt was worth. *Protag.* 328B; Ar., *E.N.* 1164*a*, 24.

do not touch Protagoras, who did not limit knowledge to perception. They are called captious because they only apply to Theaetetus' statement when that is taken more literally than he meant, and do not apply to Protagoras, upon whom Socrates has seemed to father all this complex of doctrines he has constructed by his dialectical combinations. Such cavils do not dispose of the whole point of view which Theaetetus meant to bring forward, and we do not want to quarrel about words. Further, they do not impair Plato's own doctrine of the nature of sense-perception, or shake the claim of perception, as so defined, to yield *infallible* awareness of a private object, an element in that doctrine borrowed from Protagoras himself. It still remains to be shown why Plato refuses to call such awareness ' knowledge '. Accordingly, he admits frankly that the whole position has not been disposed of by means of a few essays in sophistical disputation.

165E–168C. *The Defence of Protagoras*

The Defence now put by Socrates into the mouth of Protagoras falls into three main divisions. First comes a protest against the ' captious ' objections and a reply to them. The central and most important part attempts to meet the really damaging criticism of Protagoras himself : If every man is the measure of his own *judgments*, how can Protagoras set up to be wiser than others ? Finally, in a peroration, the sophist is (ironically) represented as exhorting the dialectician to argue seriously, not catching at words, but trying to understand what the opponent really means.

SOCR. No doubt, then, Protagoras will make all the points we have put forward in our attempt to defend him, and
166. at the same time will come to close quarters with the assailant, dismissing us with contempt.[1] ' Your admirable Socrates ', he will say, ' finds a little boy who is scared at being asked whether one and the same person can remember and at the same time not know one and the same thing. When the child is frightened into saying No, because he cannot foresee the consequence, Socrates turns the conversation so as to make a figure of fun of my unfortunate self. You take things much too easily, Socrates. The truth of the matter is this : when you ask someone questions in order to canvass some opinion of mine and he is found tripping, then I am

[1] Protagoras will both (τε) urge, as we have done for him, that we are talking clap-trap (162D), that verbal disputation is futile (164B) and we must use words more carefully (165A), and (καὶ) will come to grips (not with us, but) with the sophistic skirmisher and his armoury of eristic cavils, despising us for our feeble surrender to such weapons.

166. refuted only if his answers are such as I should have given ;
B. if they are different, it is he who is refuted, not I. For instance, do you think you will find anyone to admit that one's present memory of a past impression is an impression of the same character as one had during the original experience, which is now over ? It is nothing of the sort. Or again, will anyone shrink from admitting that it is possible for the same person to know and not to know the same thing ? Or, if he is frightened of saying that, will he ever allow that a person who is changed is the *same* as he was before the change occurred ; or rather, that he is *one* person at all, and not several, indeed an infinite succession of persons,
C. provided change goes on happening—if we are really to be on the watch against one another's attempts to catch at words ?

Protagoras here makes three replies : (1) The first is to the objection (163D) : You admit I can remember and so ' know ' an object I am not now seeing ; but you say ' I do not see ' = ' I do not know ' ; therefore I do not know what I remember, and we have the contradiction : I know and do not know the same thing. Protagoras replies : The image before my memory is not the *same thing* as a present sense-impression or even like it. So it is not true that I know (remember) and do not know (see) the *same thing*. All that the objection in fact established was that ' perception ' must be stretched to include awareness of memory images.

(2) ' No one will shrink from admitting that the same person can know and not know the same thing.' This replies to the ' most formidable ' puzzle of the man with one eye open, one shut (166B). Theaetetus did suggest the answer : If we identify perception with the physical commerce between organ and object, one of my eyes does know the object, the other does not. This reply was brushed aside ; and if we shrink from it, Protagoras says, another answer is ready.

(3) We have no right to speak of a person as *the same* at different moments. This reply is based on the theory of perception itself, which holds that the subject (organ) never remains the same for two moments together. Socrates himself has used this premiss for his conclusion at 160A : No one can have the same perception twice. We have, in fact, spoken all through as if the physical organ were the subject that perceives, and the person a mere bundle of sense-organs. Hence we could argue that Socrates-well was ' totally different ', as a measure of the sweetness or sourness of wine, from Socrates-ill. If the subject, as well as the object, is perpetually

changing, objections which turn upon the *same* person knowing and not knowing the *same* thing fall to the ground.

Thus the captious objections to Theaetetus' position are disposed of. We now turn to Protagoras' own doctrine and Socrates' criticisms of that (161C ff.).

166C. SOCR. (*continues*). 'No,' he will say; 'show a more generous spirit by attacking what I actually say; and prove, if you can, that we have not, each one of us, his peculiar perceptions, or that, granting them to be peculiar, it would not follow that what appears to each becomes—or is, if we may use the word 'is'—for him alone to whom it appears. With this talk of pigs and baboons, you are behaving like a pig yourself,[1] and, what is more, you tempt your hearers
D. to treat my writings in the same way, which is not fair.

So much for the objection: 'Why not pig the measure of all things?' That really needs no answer. For the rest, Socrates will not attempt to disprove the propositions here asserted: that each man has his private sensations and perceptions, which are infallible. This was precisely the Protagorean element adopted by Plato himself. Protagoras is not responsible for Theaetetus' suggestion, interpreted as asserting that knowledge consists solely of such perceptions. On the other hand, the doctrine 'man the measure' was not confined to perception, but included judgment. To this extension it was objected: If each man is the measure of his own judgments or beliefs, how can one be wiser than another? Here we come to the core of the Defence, which attempts to explain how one man can be wiser than another, although every man's judgments are true for him.

166D. SOCR. (*continues*). 'For I do indeed assert that the truth is as I have written: each one of us is a measure of what is and of what is not; but there is all the difference in the world between one man and another just in the very fact that what is and appears to one is different from what is and appears to the other. And as for wisdom and the wise man, I am very far from saying they do not exist. By a wise man I mean precisely a man who can change any one of us, when what is bad appears and is to him, and make what is good appear and be to him. In this statement, again, don't set off in chase of words, but let me explain

[1] The pig, in Greek, is an emblem of stupidity (ἀμαθία). *Lach.* 169D: 'Would not any pig know . . .' Cic., *Ac. Post.* i, 5, 18: *non sus docet Minervam.* This remark is less offensive than the English sounds.

166E. still more clearly what I mean. Remember how it was put earlier in the conversation : to the sick man his food appears sour and is so ; to the healthy man it is and appears the opposite. Now there is no call to represent either of the two as wiser—that cannot be—nor is the sick man to be
167. pronounced unwise because he thinks [1] as he does, or the healthy man wise because he thinks differently. What is wanted is a change to the opposite condition, because the other state is better.

' And so too in education a change has to be effected from the worse condition to the better ; only, whereas the physician produces a change by means of drugs, the sophist does it by discourse. It is not that a man makes someone who previously thought what is false think what is true (for it is not possible either to think the thing that is not or to think anything but what one experiences, and all
B. experiences are true) ; rather, I should say, when someone by reason of a depraved condition of mind has thoughts of a like character, one makes him, by reason of a sound condition, think other and sound thoughts, which some people ignorantly call true, whereas I should say that one set of thoughts is better than the other, but not in any way truer.[2] And as for the wise, my dear Socrates, so far from calling them frogs, I call them, when they have to do with the body, physicians, and when they have to do with plants, husbandmen. For I assert that husbandmen too, when plants are sickly and have depraved sensations, substitute
C. for these sensations that are sound and healthy [3] ; and moreover that wise and honest public speakers substitute in the community sound for unsound views of what is

[1] ' Thinks ', ' judges ' (δοξάζει), here replaces ' appears ' (φαίνεσθαι), What is meant is the judgment stating the fact of a sense-impression : ' This food seems and is to me sour.' If Socrates' earlier expression, ' what every man believes as the result of perception ' (ὃ ἂν δι' αἰσθήσεως δοξάζῃ, 161D) is restricted to such judgments, they are not ignorant or foolish judgments ; nor are they false.

[2] The text is doubtful. The best sense is obtained by taking τίς (167A, 7) as the subject of a single sentence from ἐπεὶ (A, 6) to οὐδέν (B, 4). Read πονηρᾷ and χρηστῇ (sc. ψυχῆς ἕξει, with W.) and omit τὰ φαντάσματα (with Diels, *Vors.*[4] ii, 225). It is the sophist, not the χρηστὴ ἕξις, that ' makes ' the change to sound thoughts. The reading χρηστὴ will then be explained as an attempt to provide the ἐποίησε following it with a subject, made by someone who did not see that τίς (governing the earlier ἐποίησε, A. 7) is still the subject.

[3] Omitting τε καὶ ἀληθεῖς. Diels' suggestion (*Vors* [4] ii, 225) ὥστε καὶ ἀληθεῖς gives a wrong sense, for the unhealthy sensations are also true. The conjectures ἀληθείας (Schleiermacher), ἕξεις (Diès), πάθας (Richards) are not convincing.

167C. right. For I hold that whatever practices seem right and laudable to any particular State are so, for that State, so long as it holds by them. Only, when the practices are, in any particular case, unsound for them, the wise man substitutes others that are and appear sound. On the same principle the sophist, since he can in the same manner guide his pupils in the way they should go, is wise and worth a
D. considerable fee to them when their education is completed. In this way it is true both that some men are wiser than others and that no one thinks falsely; and you, whether you like it or not, must put up with being a measure, since by these considerations my doctrine is saved from shipwreck.[1]

In this central section there is no reason to doubt that Socrates is doing what he professes to do—defending Protagoras' thesis as Protagoras, if he were alive, would himself have defended it.[2] The form of the argument is necessarily adapted to the context; but the contents are, in all probability, Protagorean. Protagoras was the first to claim the title of 'Sophist', with its suggestion of a superior wisdom.[3] He must have reconciled this claim with his doctrine that all opinions are equally true, and can only have done so by arguing, as he does here, that some opinions are 'better', though not truer, than others, and that his own business, as an educator, was to substitute better opinions for worse. The analogy of the husbandman substituting sound and healthy sensations in plants is an archaic touch,[4] suggesting that Plato may be drawing on Protagoras' own writings. Protagoras' special profession was to educate men and make them good citizens; and he taught the art of Rhetoric, which was to enable the public speaker to offer good counsel to the assembly in an effective form. He must have held the corresponding view, here stated, about the laws and customs of States, considered as the judgments or decisions (*δόξαι*) of the community. Such laws and customs are 'right' for that community so long as it holds by them; but a wise statesman can try to substitute others that are 'better' or 'sounder'. We may conclude that Plato here is fairly reproducing the standpoint of the historic Protagoras.

[1] *σώζεται ὁ λόγος* seems to allude to *μῦθος ἀπώλετο ὁ Πρωταγόρειος*, 164D. Cf. *Rep.* 621B *μῦθος ἐσώθη καὶ οὐκ ἀπώλετο*.

[2] Cf. H. Gomperz, *Sophistik u. Rhetorik*, p. 261. [3] *Protag.* 317B.

[4] Ps.-Arist., *de plantis* 815*a*, 15, attributes to Anaxagoras and Empedocles the view that plants have sensation and pleasure and pain. The analogy between physician, husbandman, and educator recurs at *Protag.* 334, and *Symp.* 187A, both places where Plato is using earlier material.

What, then, does the Defence actually maintain? The argument advances, by stages, from the position where Plato has already agreed with Protagoras to the position which he will challenge in the sequel.

(1) At the level of physical sensations or perceptions, it has been admitted (159–160) that a sick man's abnormal sensations are not less 'true' than the healthy man's normal ones, and that they are partly determined by his own state of body. The physician, Protagoras argues, is called in to change that state, because it is generally agreed, by physicians and patients alike, that the healthy sensations are 'better'. 'Better' presumably means 'more pleasant'; and each man is the sole judge of what he finds pleasant. The physician can be called 'wise' because he knows how to change the worse state to a better. The point that remains obscure is what sort of knowledge enables him to do this.

(2) The position of the educator is said to be analogous to the physician's; it is his business to change our mental condition from unsound to sound, so that our judgments, beliefs, opinions, may be sounder, though not truer. The crucial statement is: 'It is not that a man makes someone who previously thought what is false think what is true; for it is not possible either to think the thing that is not or to think anything beyond what one experiences, and all experiences are true.' The last words refer to Socrates' objection: 'If what every man believes as a result of perception is indeed to be true for him; if, just as no one is to be a better judge of what another *experiences* (*πάθος*), so no one is better entitled to consider whether what another *thinks* (*δόξαν*) is true or false', where is the superior wisdom of Protagoras? Protagoras' reply, 'No one can think anything beyond what he experiences, and all experiences are true', refers primarily to judgments which are supposed merely to register the fact of a present sensation: I judge that this wine seems sour to me. No one can challenge the truth of such a judgment. But in the same breath Protagoras extends this claim to all judgments or beliefs in the general statement: 'It is impossible to think the thing that is not', *i.e.*, to think what is false. The educator cannot, therefore, substitute truer beliefs; but only 'sounder' ones. What 'sounder' means is left obscure. It does not mean 'normal', for that would set up the majority as a norm or measure for the minority. It can only mean more useful or expedient: a sound belief is one that *will* produce better effects in the future.[1] 'Better effects', again, must mean effects that will seem better to me when the sophist has trained me.

[1] Protagoras' position should not be confused with modern Pragmatism, which does not assert that all beliefs must be equally true.

I shall then prefer my new beliefs to those which I now prefer. The same argument applies to the laws and customs of the State. 'Whatever practices seem right (*δίκαια*) and laudable (*καλά*) to any particular State are so, for that State, so long as it holds by them'. Thus it is locally right and socially approved that Mohammedans should have several wives, Englishmen one only. But a statesman may try to substitute 'sounder' customs. This again can only mean 'more expedient': an Englishman persuading Turks to adopt monogamy can only urge that the results will seem better to the converted Turk.

Such is Protagoras' position. The Defence now ends with a peroration, in which Protagoras lectures Socrates for frivolity and the points outstanding for serious criticism are recalled.

167D. SOCR. (*continues*). 'Now if you can dispute this doctrine in principle, do so by argument stating the case on the other side, or by asking questions, if you prefer that method, which has no terrors for a man of sense; on the contrary it ought to be specially agreeable to him. Only there is
E. this rule to be observed: do not conduct your questioning unfairly. It is very unreasonable that one who professes a concern for virtue should be constantly guilty of unfairness in argument. Unfairness here consists in not observing the distinction between a debate and a conversation. A debate need not be taken seriously and one may trip up an opponent to the best of one's power; but a conversation should be taken in earnest; one should help out the other party and bring home to him only those slips and fallacies
168. that are due to himself or to his earlier instructors. If you follow this rule, your associates will lay the blame for their confusions and perplexities on themselves and not on you; they will like you and court your society, and disgusted with themselves, will turn to philosophy, hoping to escape from their former selves and become different men. But if, like so many, you take the opposite course, you will reach the opposite result: instead of turning your com-
B. panions to philosophy, you will make them hate the whole business when they get older. So, if you will take my advice, you will meet us in the candid spirit I spoke of, without hostility or contentiousness, and honestly consider what we mean when we say that all things are in motion and that what seems also is, to any individual or community. The further question whether knowledge is, or is not, the same thing as perception, you will consider as a

168B. consequence of these principles, not (as you did just now)
C. basing your argument on the common use of words and phrases, which the vulgar twist into any sense they please and so perplex one another in all sorts of ways.'

So the Defence ends. The central part was confined to genuine Protagorean doctrine; but here we are reminded that Socrates' dialectical construction has included also the Heracleitean flux and Theaetetus' claim that perception is the same thing as knowledge. All three elements still await serious criticism, and they are dealt with separately in the sequel. (1) The Protagorean thesis—Every judgment true for him who makes it—is refuted for the individual (169D–171C) and for the State (177C–179B); next (2) the unrestricted doctrine—All things are in motion—is denounced as fatal to all discourse (179C–183B); and (3) the identification of perception with knowledge is finally rejected (184B–186E).

168C–169D. *Interlude*

In an interlude Theodorus is again drawn into the discussion. This marks that the next section of the argument is directed against his friend Protagoras, who is not held responsible for the two other theses.

168C. SOCR. (*continues*). Such, Theodorus, is my contribution to the defence of your friend—the best I can make from my small means. Were he alive to speak for himself, it would be a much more impressive affair.
THEOD. You are not serious, Socrates; your defence was most spirited.
SOCR. Thank you, my friend. And now, did you notice how Protagoras was reproaching us for taking a child to
D. argue with and using the boy's timidity to get the better of his own position in what he called a mere play of wit, in contrast to the solemnity of his measure of all things, and how he exhorted us to be serious about his doctrine?
THEOD. Of course I did, Socrates.
SOCR. What then? Do you think we should do as he says?
THEOD. Most certainly.
SOCR. Well, the company, as you see, are all children, except yourself. If we are to treat his doctrine seriously,
E. as he enjoins, you and I must question one another. So we shall at any rate escape the charge of making light of it by discussing it with boys.
THEOD. Why, surely Theaetetus can follow up such an

168E. investigation better than a great many men with long beards.

SOCR. But not better than you, Theodorus. So don't imagine that you have no duty to your departed friend, but can leave it to me to make the best defence for him. Please
169. come with us a little of the way at any rate—just until we know whether, in the matter of mathematical demonstrations, you cannot help being a measure, or everybody is just as competent as you in geometry and astronomy and all the other subjects you are supposed to excel in.

THEOD. It is no easy matter to escape questioning in your company, Socrates. I was deluded when I said you would leave me in peace and not force me into the ring like the Spartans: you seem to be as unrelenting as Skiron. The
B. Spartans tell you to go away if you will not wrestle, but Antaeus is more in your line: you will let no one who comes near you go until you have stripped him by force for a trial of strength.

SOCR. Your comparisons exactly fit what is wrong with me, Theodorus; but my capacity for endurance is even greater. I have encountered many heroes in debate, and times without number a Heracles or a Theseus has broken my head;
C. but I have so deep a passion for exercise of this sort that I stick to it all the same. So don't deny me the pleasure of a trial, for your own benefit as well as mine.

THEOD. I have no more to say; lead me where you will. You are like Fate: no one can elude the toils of argument you spin for him. But I shall not be able to oblige you beyond the point you have proposed.

SOCR. Enough, if you will go so far. And please be on the watch for fear we should be betrayed into arguing
D. frivolously and be blamed for that again.

THEOD. I will try as well as I can.

169D–171D. *Criticism of Protagoras' doctrine as extended to all judgments*

Socrates now opens the attack on the genuinely Protagorean doctrine put forward in the central part of the Defence—the extension of the maxim, Man the measure, beyond the field of immediate perception (where we accepted it) to all judgments.

Our original objection (161D) was: If all judgments are true to him who makes them, how can one man be wiser than another? In the Defence Protagoras was represented as 'conceding' that some are wiser than others, and this might seem to weaken his case.

Socrates now observes that we ought to make sure of this step by deducing it formally from what Protagoras certainly did say, namely, that 'what seems to each man is to him'. Presumably, Plato wishes to avoid the imputation of attributing to Protagoras a statement which did not appear just in that form in his writings.

169D. SOCR. Let us begin, then, by coming to grips with the doctrine at the same point as before. Let us see whether or not our discontent was justified, when we criticised it as making every individual self-sufficient in wisdom. Protagoras then conceded that some people were superior in the matter of what is better or worse, and these, he said, were wise. Didn't he?

THEOD. Yes.

SOCR. If he were here himself to make that admission,
E. instead of our conceding it for him in our defence, there would be no need to reopen the question and make sure of our ground; but, as things are, we might be said to have no authority to make the admission on his behalf. So it will be more satisfactory to come to a more complete and clear agreement on this particular point; for it makes a considerable difference, whether this is so or not.

THEOD. That is true.

SOCR. Let us, then, as briefly as possible, obtain his agreement, not through any third person, but from his
170. own statement.

THEOD. How?

SOCR. In this way. He says—doesn't he?—that what seems true [1] to anyone is true for him to whom it seems so?

THEOD. He does.

SOCR. Well now, Protagoras, we are expressing what seems true to a man, or rather to all men, when we say that everyone without exception holds that in some respects he is wiser than his neighbours and in others they are wiser than he. For instance, in moments of great danger and distress, whether in war or in sickness or at sea, men regard as a god anyone who can take control of the situation and
B. look to him as a saviour, when his only point of superiority is his knowledge. Indeed, the world is full of people looking for those who can instruct and govern men and animals and direct their doings, and on the other hand of people who think themselves quite competent to undertake the teaching

[1] τὸ δοκοῦν here, as the context shows, mean 'what seems true'. Since Protagoras' maxim covered judgment, the interpretation is perfectly fair.

170B. and governing. In all these cases what can we say, if not that men do hold that wisdom and ignorance exist among them?

THEOD. We must say that.

SOCR. And they hold that wisdom lies in thinking truly, and ignorance in false belief?

C. THEOD. Of course.

SOCR. In that case, Protagoras, what are we to make of your doctrine? Are we to say that what men think is always true, or that it is sometimes true and sometimes false? From either supposition it results that their thoughts are not always true, but both true and false. For consider, Theodorus. Are you, or is any Protagorean, prepared to maintain that no one regards anyone else as ignorant or as making false judgments?

THEOD. That is incredible, Socrates.

D. SOCR. That, however, is the inevitable consequence of the doctrine which makes man the measure of all things.

THEOD. How so?

SOCR. When you have formed a judgment on some matter in your own mind and express an opinion about it to me, let us grant that, as Protagoras' theory says, it is true for you; but are we to understand that it is impossible for us, the rest of the company, to pronounce any judgment upon your judgment; or, if we can, that we always pronounce your opinion to be true? Do you not rather find thousands of opponents who set their opinion against yours on every occasion and hold that your judgment and belief are false?

E. THEOD. I should just think so, Socrates; thousands and tens of thousands, as Homer says; and they give me all the trouble in the world.

SOCR. And what then? Would you have us say that in such a case the opinion you hold is true for yourself and false for these tens of thousands?

THEOD. The doctrine certainly seems to imply that.

SOCR. And what is the consequence for Protagoras himself? Is it not this: supposing that not even he believed in man being the measure and the world in general did not believe it either—as in fact it doesn't—then this Truth which he

171. wrote would not be true for anyone? If, on the other hand, he did believe it, but the mass of mankind does not agree with him, then, you see, it is more false than true by just so much as the unbelievers outnumber the believers.

171. THEOD. That follows, if its truth or falsity varies with each individual opinion.

SOCR. Yes, and besides that it involves a really exquisite conclusion.[1] Protagoras, for his part, admitting as he does that everybody's opinion is true, must acknowledge the truth of his opponents' belief about his own belief, where they think he is wrong.

THEOD. Certainly.

B. SOCR. That is to say, he would acknowledge his own belief to be false, if he admits that the belief of those who think him wrong is true?

THEOD. Necessarily.

SOCR. But the others, on their side, do not admit to themselves that they are wrong.

THEOD. No.

SOCR. Whereas Protagoras, once more, according to what he has written, admits that this opinion of theirs is as true as any other.

THEOD. Evidently.

SOCR. On all hands, then, Protagoras included, his opinion will be disputed, or rather Protagoras will join in the general consent—when he admits to an opponent the truth

C. of his contrary opinion, from that moment Protagoras himself will be admitting that a dog or the man in the street is not a measure of anything whatever that he does not understand. Isn't that so?

THEOD. Yes.

SOCR. Then, since it is disputed by everyone, the Truth of Protagoras is true to nobody—to himself no more than to anyone else.

THEOD. We are running my old friend too hard, Socrates.

SOCR. But it is not clear that we are outrunning the truth, my friend. Of course it is likely that, as an older man, he

D. was wiser than we are; and if at this moment he could pop his head up through the ground there as far as to the neck, very probably he would expose me thoroughly for talking such nonsense and you for agreeing to it, before he sank out of sight and took to his heels. However, we must do our best with such lights as we have and continue to say what we think.

[1] Sextus, *Math.* vii, 389, says that an argument of this form, known as 'turning the tables' (*περιτροπή*), was used against Protagoras by Democritus, as well as by Plato here.

Socrates' last words probably do not mean that Protagoras would, in Plato's opinion, have had any valid answer to make. The argument has fairly deduced, on Protagoras' own principles, the consequences of asserting that what every man thinks true is true for him. It does follow for Protagoras' opponents that his doctrine is not true, and, for Protagoras himself, that their belief in its falsity is true for them.

171D–172B. *Restatement of the question: wherein lies the superiority of the wise?*

This argument, however, is *ad hominem*. The real issue between Protagoras and Plato is too serious to be disposed of so lightly, and Socrates now gives the conversation a graver turn. He begins by restating the premiss on which all, including Protagoras, are agreed: that one man can be wiser than another. Wherein can such superiority lie? Not in the field of immediate perception of sense-qualities: there (as Plato is careful to note once more) we have agreed with Protagoras that each man is the measure of what is, or rather 'becomes', for him. But the Defence itself claimed a superiority in wisdom for the physician, the educator, and the statesman. All these undertake to change our condition and make 'better' things 'appear and be' to the individual or to the State. We have still to inquire what this profession implies.

171D. SOCR. (*continues*). Now, for instance, must we not say that everyone would agree at least to this: that one man can be wiser or more ignorant than another?

THEOD. I certainly think so.

SOCR. And further, shall we say that the doctrine would find its firmest footing in the position we traced out in
E. our defence of Protagoras: that most things—hot, dry, sweet, everything of that sort—are to each person as they appear to him? Whereas, if there is any case in which the theory would concede that one man is superior to another, it might consent to admit that, in the matter of good or bad health, not any woman or child—or animal, for that matter—knows what is wholesome for it and is capable of curing itself; but that here, if anywhere, one person is superior to another.

THEOD. I should certainly say so.

172. SOCR. And again in social matters, the theory will say that, so far as good and bad customs or rights and wrongs or matters of religion are concerned, whatever any State makes up its mind to enact as lawful for itself, really is

172. lawful for it, and in this field no individual or State is wiser than another. But where it is a question of laying down what is for its advantage or disadvantage, once more there, if anywhere, the theory will admit a difference between two advisers or between the decisions of two different States in respect of truth, and would hardly venture to assert that any enactment which a State supposes to be
B. for its advantage will quite certainly be so.

The position taken up in the Defence is here restated fairly. The doctor has some wisdom or knowledge justifying his offer to change my condition to one in which things he calls 'better' will appear and be to me. His case is parallel to that of the statesman, who uses his eloquence to recommend a change of custom or of law or a practical policy. If 'right' means simply what is enjoined by law and a 'good custom' one that is in fact socially approved, no State can claim to be wiser than another. But anyone who comes forward to recommend a change must claim that it will produce 'better' results, that is to say, results which will appear as more advantageous when the change has been effected. When we return to this point later, it will be argued that the doctor's or the statesman's present judgment about what will be more advantageous in the future conflicts, *ex hypothesi*, with the judgment of his unconverted hearers, and that both cannot be true. This argument, however, is not developed until after the 'digression', which now follows.

172B–177C. *Digression: the contrast of Philosophy and Rhetoric*

The occasion of this digression has not been well understood. Socrates breaks off at this point to suggest that some who 'do not argue altogether as Protagoras does' may not accept the analogy that has just been drawn between the doctor's concern with the bodily health of the individual and the statesman's concern with questions of right and wrong. They will deny that 'right' has any meaning at all other than what is publicly decreed at any time. This, as Socrates says, raises a larger issue than the argument we were just embarking upon with Protagoras.

172B. SOCR. (*continues*). But, in that field I am speaking of—in right and wrong and matters of religion—people [1] are ready to affirm that none of these things is natural, with a reality of its own, but rather that the public decision becomes true

[1] The subject of the plural ἐθέλουσι is not the same as the singular subject (ὁ λόγος) of the previous sentences, and accordingly not Protagoreans but (as Campbell says) 'certain persons who are presently defined'.

172B. at the moment when it is made and remains true so long as the decision stands; and those who do not argue altogether as Protagoras does carry on their philosophy on these lines.[1]

But one theory after another is coming upon us, Theo-
C. dorus, and the last is more important than the one before.

Editors have not seen clearly that this sentence does not amplify the preceding one, but introduces a new position held, not by Protagoras, but by people who do not state their position altogether as Protagoras stated his. Their view is the 'more important' theory, involving larger issues than the restricted position we have just ascribed to Protagoras, the consideration of which is accordingly postponed.

What is this larger theory? Those who hold it are not 'incomplete Protagoreans', but go further than Protagoras himself. They deny the analogy between physical qualities (hot, dry, sweet, etc.) and moral qualities like 'just'. The hot and the cold, the dry and the moist, they will say, exist 'by nature'; and they would agree with Protagoras that the fact that one contrary appears to me, the other to you, is consistent with their having an objective being of their own. But 'just' and 'unjust', they say, have no status in Nature; they are mere creations of convention or of the public decision of the community. We have no evidence that Protagoras went so far as this.[2] It is the extreme position formulated in the *Republic* by Thrasymachus, who denies that 'right' has any natural validity: the word means nothing more than what the most powerful element in the State decrees for its own advantage (*τὸ τοῦ κρείττονος συμφέρον*). He would reject the distinction Socrates has just drawn between what is laid down as lawful and what is decided upon as advantageous (*συμφέροντα*). When Socrates argued in the *Republic* (as he will later in the *Theaetetus*) that the strongest element in the State may be mistaken about its own advantage, Thrasymachus was not convinced. The atheists of *Laws* X (889 ff.) draw the same contrast between Nature and convention. Fire, Air, Water, and Earth exist by nature and

[1] Reading *καὶ ὅσοι γε δὴ. . . λέγουσι*. *"Οσοι ἂν λέγωσι* would mean '*all* who do not argue', and we should then have to understand (with M. Diès and others) all who do *not go so far* as Protagoras. But these people go further. It is not true that everyone who stops short of Protagoras' position holds the extreme view here stated.

[2] His speech in the *Protagoras* 320 ff. recognises innate moral instincts of *αἰδώς* and *δίκη*, existing in all men before society is formed. Education in virtue is a development of these natural instincts by a socialising process, making men good citizens of their own States.

chance, without design; and by the interplay of their active powers—hot, cold, dry, moist, etc.—produce the whole physical cosmos. But art or design arises only later; it is mortal and of mortal origin. The whole of legislation, custom, and religion is 'not by nature, but by art'. Conventions differ in different communities. 'What is right (τὰ δίκαια) has no natural existence at all; but men are perpetually disputing about it and altering it, and whatever alteration they make at any time is at that time authoritative, owing its existence to design and the laws, not in any way to nature' (889E). This is precisely the position stated here, the extreme consequence of making man the measure of all things, but a consequence never, so far as we know, drawn by Protagoras himself, who did not dream of subverting the basis of morality.

To Plato this thesis is the position of the arch-enemy; the whole of the *Republic* is a reply to it. Here, acknowledging that it cannot be attributed to Protagoras, Socrates drops for a time the criticism of Protagoras' own theory, and replies indirectly in the 'digression' that follows. A direct treatment would demand a repetition of the contents of the *Republic* and arguments supporting the Platonic thesis that the moral Forms, Justice and the rest, do 'exist by nature with a being of their own'. But the Forms are to be excluded, so far as possible, from this conversation, which discusses the claim of the world of appearances to yield knowledge without invoking the intelligible world. So Plato is content to indicate his answer by reviving the contrast drawn in the *Gorgias* and the *Republic* between the orator of the law court or the Assembly and the true statesman, the philosopher whose knowledge lies in that other realm of reality. The whole digression is studded with allusions to the *Republic*, and in the course of it the moral Forms are plainly, though unobtrusively, mentioned.

172C. THEOD. Well, Socrates, we have time at our disposal.
SOCR. Evidently. And it strikes me now, as often before, how natural it is that men who have spent much time in philosophical studies[1] should look ridiculous when they appear as speakers in a court of law.
THEOD. How do you mean?
SOCR. When you compare men who have knocked about from their youth up in law courts and such places with others bred in philosophical pursuits, the one set seem to
D. have been trained as slaves, the others as free men.

[1] *Φιλοσοφία* has often a wide meaning covering all liberal studies (as at 143D) or 'culture' (as in Isocrates).

172D. THEOD. In what way?

SOCR. In the way you spoke of: the free man always has time at his disposal to converse in peace at his leisure. He will pass, as we are doing now, from one argument to another—we have just reached the third; like us, he will leave the old for a fresh one which takes his fancy more; and he does not care how long or short the discussion may be, if only it attains the truth. The orator is always talking

E. against time, hurried on by the clock; there is no space to enlarge upon any subject he chooses, but the adversary stands over him ready to recite a schedule of the points to which he must confine himself. He is a slave disputing about a fellow-slave before a master sitting in judgment with some definite plea in his hand; and the issue is never indifferent, but his personal concerns are always at stake,

173. sometimes even his life. Hence he acquires a tense and bitter shrewdness; he knows how to flatter his master and earn his good graces, but his mind is narrow and crooked. An apprenticeship in slavery has dwarfed and twisted his growth and robbed him of his free spirit, driving him into devious ways, threatening him with fears and dangers which the tenderness of youth could not face with truth and honesty; so, turning from the first to lies and the requital of wrong

B. with wrong, warped and stunted, he passes from youth to manhood with no soundness in him and turns out, in the end, a man of formidable intellect—as he imagines.

So much for the orator, Theodorus. Shall I now describe the philosophic quire to which we belong, or would you rather leave that and go back to our discussion? We must not abuse that freedom we claimed of ranging from one subject to another.

THEOD. No, Socrates; let us have your description first.

C. As you said quite rightly, we are not the servants of the argument, which must stand and wait for the moment when we choose to pursue this or that topic to a conclusion. We are not in a court under the judge's eye, nor in the theatre with an audience to criticise our philosophic evolutions.

SOCR. Then, if that is your wish, let us speak of the leaders in philosophy; for the weaker members may be neglected.

D. From their youth up they have never known the way to market-place or law court or council chamber or any other place of public assembly; they never hear a decree read out or look at the text of a law; to take any interest in

173D. the rivalries of political cliques, in meetings, dinners, and merrymakings with flute-girls, never occurs to them even in dreams. Whether any fellow-citizen is well or ill born or has inherited some defect from his ancestors on either side, the philosopher knows no more than how many pints of water there are in the sea. He is not even aware that
E. he knows nothing of all this; for if he holds aloof, it is not for reputation's sake, but because it is really only his body that sojourns in his city, while his thought, disdaining all such things as worthless, takes wings, as Pindar says, 'beyond the sky, beneath the earth', searching the heavens and measuring the plains, everywhere seeking the true
174. nature of everything as a whole, never sinking to what lies close at hand.

THEOD. What do you mean, Socrates?

SOCR. The same thing as the story about the Thracian maidservant who exercised her wit at the expense of Thales, when he was looking up to study the stars and tumbled down a well. She scoffed at him for being so eager to know what was happening in the sky that he could not see what lay at his feet. Anyone who gives his life to philo-
B. sophy is open to such mockery. It is true that he is unaware what his next-door neighbour is doing, hardly knows, indeed, whether the creature is a man at all; he spends all his pains on the question, what man is, and what powers and properties distinguish such a nature from any other.[1] You see what I mean, Theodorus?

THEOD. Yes; and it is true.

SOCR. And so, my friend, as I said at first, on a public
C. occasion or in private company, in a law court or anywhere else, when he is forced to talk about what lies at his feet or is before his eyes, the whole rabble will join the maid-servants in laughing at him, as from inexperience he walks blindly and stumbles into every pitfall. His terrible clumsiness makes him seem so stupid. He cannot engage in an exchange of abuse,[2] for, never having made a study of anyone's peculiar weaknesses, he has no personal scandals to bring up; so in his helplessness he looks a fool. When
D. people vaunt their own or other men's merits, his unaffected laughter makes him conspicuous and they think he is frivolous. When a despot or king is eulogised, he fancies

[1] A clear allusion to the theory of Forms. The real object of knowledge is the Form 'Man', not individual men.

[2] A constant feature of forensic speeches at Athens.

174D. he is hearing some keeper of swine or sheep or cows being congratulated on the quantity of milk he has squeezed out of his flock; only he reflects that the animal that princes tend and milk is more given than sheep or cows to nurse a sullen grievance, and that a herdsman of this sort, penned up in his castle, is doomed by sheer press of
E. work to be as rude and uncultivated as the shepherd in his mountain fold. He hears of the marvellous wealth of some landlord who owns ten thousand acres or more; but that seems a small matter to one accustomed to think of the earth as a whole. When they harp upon birth—some gentleman who can point to seven generations of wealthy ancestors—he thinks that such commendation must come from men of purblind vision, too uneducated to keep their
175. eyes fixed on the whole or to reflect that any man has had countless myriads of ancestors and among them any number of rich men and beggars, kings and slaves, Greeks and barbarians. To pride oneself on a catalogue of twenty-five progenitors going back to Heracles, son of Amphitryon, strikes him as showing a strange pettiness of outlook. He laughs at a man who cannot rid his mind of foolish vanity
B. by reckoning that before Amphitryon there was a twenty-fifth ancestor, and before him a fiftieth, whose fortunes were as luck would have it. But in all these matters the world has the laugh of the philosopher, partly because he seems arrogant, partly because of his helpless ignorance in matters of daily life.

THEOD. Yes, Socrates, that is exactly what happens.

SOCR. On the other hand, my friend, when the philosopher drags the other upwards to a height at which he may
C. consent to drop the question 'What injustice have I done to you or you to me?' and to think about justice and injustice in themselves, what each is, and how they differ from one another and from anything else[1]; or to stop quoting poetry about the happiness of kings or of men with gold in store and think about the meaning of kingship and the whole question of human happiness and misery, what their nature is, and how humanity can gain the one and escape the other—in all this field, when that small, shrewd,
D. legal mind has to render an account, then the situation is reversed. Now it is he who is dizzy from hanging at such an unaccustomed height and looking down from mid-air.

[1] The moral Forms are here openly mentioned, and there are allusions to the allegory of the Cave in *Rep.* vi.

175D. Lost and dismayed and stammering, he will be laughed at, not by maidservants or the uneducated—they will not see what is happening—but by everyone whose breeding has been the antithesis of a slave's.

Such are the two characters, Theodorus. The one is
E. nursed in freedom and leisure, the philosopher, as you call him. He may be excused if he looks foolish or useless when faced with some menial task, if he cannot tie up bedclothes into a neat bundle or flavour a dish with spices and a speech with flattery. The other is smart in the dispatch of all such services, but has not learnt to wear his cloak like
176. a gentleman, or caught the accent of discourse that will rightly celebrate the true life of happiness for gods and men.

THEOD. If you could convince everyone, Socrates, as you convince me, there would be more peace and fewer evils in the world.

SOCR. Evils, Theodorus, can never be done away with, for the good must always have its contrary; nor have they any place in the divine world; but they must needs haunt this region of our mortal nature. That is why we should make all speed to take flight from this world to the other; and
B. that means becoming like the divine so far as we can, and that again is to become righteous with the help of wisdom. But it is no such easy matter to convince men that the reasons for avoiding wickedness and seeking after goodness are not those which the world gives. The right motive is not that one should seem innocent and good—that is no better, to my thinking, than an old wives' tale—but let us state the truth in this way. In the divine there is no
C. shadow of unrighteousness, only the perfection of righteousness; and nothing is more like the divine than any one of us who becomes as righteous as possible. It is here that a man shows his true spirit and power or lack of spirit and nothingness. For to know this is wisdom and excellence of the genuine sort; not to know it is to be manifestly blind and base. All other forms of seeming power and intelligence in the rulers of society are as mean and vulgar as the
D. mechanic's skill in handicraft. If a man's words and deeds are unrighteous and profane, he had best not persuade himself that he is a great man because he sticks at nothing, glorying in his shame as such men do when they fancy that others say of them: They are no fools, no useless burdens to the earth, but men of the right sort to weather the storms

176D. of public life. Let the truth be told: they are what they fancy they are not, all the more for deceiving themselves; for they are ignorant of the very thing it most concerns them to know—the penalty of injustice. This is not, as they imagine, stripes and death, which do not always fall on the
E. wrong-doer, but a penalty that cannot be escaped.

THEOD. What penalty is that?

SOCR. There are two patterns, my friend, in the unchangeable nature of things, one of divine happiness, the other of godless misery—a truth to which their folly makes them
177. utterly blind, unaware that in doing injustice they are growing less like one of these patterns and more like the other. The penalty they pay is the life they lead, answering to the pattern they resemble. But if we tell them that, unless they rid themselves of their superior cunning, that other region which is free from all evil will not receive them after death, but here on earth they will dwell for all time in some form of life resembling their own and in the society of things as evil as themselves, all this will sound like foolishness to such strong and unscrupulous minds.

THEOD. So it will, Socrates.

B. SOCR. I have good reason to know it, my friend. But there is one thing about them: when you get them alone and make them explain their objections to philosophy, then, if they are men enough to face a long examination without running away, it is odd how they end by finding their own arguments unsatisfying; somehow their flow of eloquence runs dry, and they become as speechless as an infant.

All this, however, is a digression; we must stop now,
C. and dam the flood of topics that threatens to break in and drown our original argument. With your leave, let us go back to where we were before.

THEOD. For my part, I rather prefer listening to your digressions, Socrates; they are easier to follow at my time of life. However, let us go back, if you like.

The tone of this digression goes beyond the *Gorgias* and the *Phaedo* and is far removed from the humanity of Socrates, who certainly knew the way to the market-place, though he deliberately kept out of politics. There is a foretaste of Cynicism in the emphatic contempt of wealth and high birth. The main contrast is not between the life of contemplation and the active life, to which, in a reformed society, the philosopher king would acknowledge his duty to descend. Many saints, like Teresa, have led very

active lives without abandoning the joys of contemplation. The life contrasted with the philosopher's is at first that of the rhetorician, and towards the end that of the man trained in rhetoric to be the ruler of society, the strong-minded man who will stick at nothing and thinks himself a 'realist' because he has no conception of the reality of ideals—a familiar figure in the post-war world of Plato's manhood, as in our own. It is an easy conjecture that some part of this tirade was inspired by Plato's experiences at the court of Syracuse.

The allusions to the allegory of the Cave, the passage about the true meaning of kingship, happiness, and justice, are intended to recall the whole argument of the *Republic*, with its doctrine of the divine, intelligible region of Forms, the true objects of knowledge. This is no mere digression; it indicates—what cannot be directly stated—the final cleavage between Platonism and the extreme consequences of the Protagorean thesis. The *Theaetetus* here opens a window upon the world of true being; but the vision must be closed. Our concern at present is only with the world of appearances and its claim to yield knowledge.

177C–179C. *Refutation of the Defence of Protagoras*

The argument is now resumed at the point where it was dropped (172A), when the genuinely Protagorean position had been isolated from extraneous elements. That position is now stated again, to mark that we have been straying beyond it. Socrates proceeds to refute the defence he put forward earlier on Protagoras' behalf.

177C. SOCR. Very well. I think the point we had reached was this. We were saying that the believers in a perpetually changing reality and in the doctrine that what seems to an individual at any time also is for him would, in most matters, strongly insist upon their principle, and not least in the case of what is right they would maintain that any
D. enactments a State may decide on certainly are right for that State so long as they remain in force; but when it comes to what is good, we said that the boldest would not go to the length of contending that whatever a State may believe and declare to be advantageous for itself is in fact advantageous for so long as it is declared to be so—unless he meant that the name 'advantageous' would continue to be so applied; but that would be turning our subject into a joke.

THEOD. Certainly.

177E. Socr. We will suppose, then, that he does not mean the name, but has in view the thing that bears it.

Theod. We will.[1]

Socr. Whatever name the State may give it, advantage is surely the aim of its legislation, and all its laws, to the full extent of its belief and power, are laid down as being for its own best profit. Or has it any other object in view when it makes laws?

178. Theod. None.

Socr. Then does it also hit the mark every time? Or does every State often miss its aim completely?

Theod. I should say that mistakes are often made.

Socr. We may have a still better chance of getting everyone to assent to that, if we start from a question covering the whole class of things which includes the advantageous. It is, I suggest, a thing that has to do with future time. When we legislate, we make our laws with the idea that they *will be* advantageous in time to come. We may call this class 'what is going to be'.

B. Theod. Certainly.

Socr. Here, then, is a question for Protagoras or anyone else who agrees with him: According to you and your friends, Protagoras, man is the measure of all things—of white and heavy and light and everything of that sort. He possesses in himself the test of these things, and believing them to be such as he experiences them, he believes what is true and real for him. Is that right?

Theod. Yes.

Socr. Is it also true, Protagoras (we shall continue), that

C. he possesses within himself the test of what is going to be in the future, and that whatever a man believes will be, actually comes to pass for him who believes it? Take heat, for example. When some layman believes that he is going to catch a fever[2] and that this hotness is going to exist, and another, who is a physician, believes the contrary, are we to suppose that the future event will turn out in accordance with one of the two opinions, or in accordance with both opinions, so that to the physician the patient will not be hot or in a fever, while he will be both these things to himself?

[1] It is not a question of the State giving the name 'advantageous' to any class of actions it enjoins. Legislation must be understood to imply a judgment that the conduct prescribed will have good effects.

[2] *πυρετὸν* is subject of *λήψεσθαι*, cf. *Phaedr.* 251A, *ἵδρως καὶ θερμότης ἀηθὴς λαμβάνει*.

178c. THEOD. That would be absurd.

SOCR. And on the question whether a wine is going to be
D. sweet or dry, I imagine the vine-grower's judgment is authoritative, not a flute-player's.

THEOD. Of course.

SOCR. Or again, on the question whether a piece of music is going to be in tune or not, a gymnastic trainer would not have a better opinion than a musician as to what the trainer himself will later judge to be in good tune.

THEOD. By no means.

SOCR. And when a feast is being prepared, the guest who is to be invited, supposing him not to be an expert in cookery, will have a less authoritative opinion than the confectioner upon the pleasure that will result. We will not dispute yet
E. about what already is or has been pleasant to any individual; but about what will in the future seem and be to anyone, is every man the best judge for himself, or would you, Protagoras,—at least in the matter of the arguments that any one of us would find convincing for a court of law —have a better opinion beforehand than any untrained person?

THEOD. Certainly, Socrates, in that matter he did emphatically profess to be superior to everybody.

SOCR. Bless your soul, I should think he did. No one
179. would have paid huge sums to talk with him, if he had not convinced the people who came to him that no one whatever, not even a prophet, could judge better than he what was going to be and appear in the future.

THEOD. Quite true.

SOCR. And legislation, too, and the question of advantageousness are matters concerned with the future; and everyone would agree that a State, when it makes its laws, must often fail to hit upon its own greatest advantage?

THEOD. Assuredly.

SOCR. Then we may quite reasonably put it to your master
B. that he must admit that one man is wiser than another and that the wiser man is the measure, whereas an ignorant person like myself is not in any way bound to be a measure, as our defence of Protagoras tried to make me, whether I liked it or not.

THEOD. I think that is the weakest point in the theory, Socrates, though it is also assailable in that it makes other people's opinions valid when, as it turns out, they hold Protagoras' assertions to be quite untrue.

179C. SOCR. There are many other ways, Theodorus, of assailing such a position and proving that not every opinion of every person is true.

The Defence of Protagoras is thus refuted. The argument which 'turns the tables' is reaffirmed by Theodorus; and it has been shown that not all judgments can be true. When the patient and the doctor disagree about what the patient's experiences will be at some future time, they are disagreeing about the same fact, which is not at the moment part of the private experience of either, so that he might claim to be the only possible judge. They cannot both be right. No more can two politicians who dispute whether some law or decree will have good effects for the State. Protagoras' own profession as an educator of good citizens rested entirely on his claim to be a better judge than his pupils of what they would, when educated, find to be good for them.

179C–181B. *The extreme Heracleitean position, contrasted with Parmenides' denial of all motion and change*

Plato has now shown why he will not accept the Protagorean position as extended by its author to judgments which go beyond the individual's immediate and private experience of his present sensations. But within this narrower field he has himself accepted the position, and built it into his own account of the nature of perception. We must now return to that account and consider the second element, drawn from the flux doctrine of Heracleitus. With what reservations and restrictions are we to adopt the principle that all things are perpetually in motion?

179C. SOCR. (*continues*). But with regard to what the individual experiences at the moment—the source of his sensations and the judgments in accordance with them—it is harder to assail the truth of these. Perhaps it is wrong to say 'harder'; maybe they are unassailable, and those who assert that they are transparently clear [1] and are instances of knowledge may be in the right, and Theaetetus was not beside the mark when he said that perception and know-
D. ledge were the same thing.

We must, then, look more closely into the matter, as our defence of Protagoras enjoined, and study this moving

[1] Cf. *Phaedrus* 250C, 'through the *clearest* of the senses, sight, we apprehend beauty in the perfect *clearness* of its radiance' (διὰ τῆς ἐναργεστάτης αἰσθήσεως στίλβον ἐναργέστατα). Plato will contend that perception of sensible qualities, though infallible in the sense above defined, does not reveal true reality and is therefore not knowledge.

179D. reality, ringing its metal to hear if it sounds true or cracked. However that may be, there has been no inconsiderable battle over it and not a few combatants.

THEOD. Anything but inconsiderable ; in Ionia, indeed, it is actually growing in violence. The followers of Heracleitus lead the quire of this persuasion with the greatest vigour.

SOCR. All the more reason, my dear Theodorus, to look into it carefully and to follow their lead by tracing it to its

E. source.

THEOD. By all means. For there is no discussing these principles of Heracleitus—or, as you say, of Homer or still more ancient sages—with the Ephesians themselves, who profess to be familiar with them ; you might as well talk to a maniac. Faithful to their own treatises they are literally in perpetual motion ; their capacity for staying still to attend to an argument or a question or for a quiet

180. interchange of question and answer amounts to less than nothing, or rather even a minus quantity is too strong an expression for the absence of the least modicum of repose in these gentry.[1] When you put a question, they pluck from their quiver little oracular aphorisms to let fly at you ; and if you try to obtain some account of their meaning, you will be instantly transfixed by another, barbed with some newly forged metaphor. You will never get anywhere with any of them ; for that matter they cannot get anywhere with one another, but they take very good care to leave

B. nothing settled either in discourse or in their own minds ; I suppose they think that would be something stationary —a thing they will fight against to the last and do their utmost to banish from the universe.

SOCR. Perhaps, Theodorus, you have seen these gentlemen in the fray and never met them in their peaceable moments ; indeed they are no friends of yours. I dare say they keep such matters to be explained at leisure to their pupils whom they want to make like themselves.

THEOD. Pupils indeed ! My good friend, there is no such

C. thing as a master or pupil among them ; they spring up like mushrooms. Each one gets his inspiration wherever he can, and not one of them thinks that another understands anything. So, as I was going to say, you can never bring them

[1] Taking τὸ οὐδ' οὐδέν (' not even nothing ' = a minus quantity) as the subject of ὑπερβάλλει, ' is excessive (an exaggerated estimate) with respect to the absence of even a little quietness in them '. For πρός, cf. *Soph.* 258A, 5 ; *Phaedo* 75A, 9.

180c. to book, either with or without their consent. We must take over the question ourselves and try to solve it like a problem.

SOCR. That is a reasonable proposal. As to this problem, then, have we not here a tradition from the ancients who

D. hid their meaning from the common herd in poetical figures, that Ocean and Tethys, the source of all things, are flowing streams and nothing is at rest; and do not the moderns, in their superior wisdom, declare the same quite openly, in order that the very cobblers may hear and understand their wisdom and, abandoning their simple faith that some things stand still while others move, may reverence those who teach them that everything is in motion?

But I had almost forgotten, Theodorus, another school

E. which teaches just the opposite, that reality 'is one, immovable: "Being" is the name of the All',[1] and much else that men like Melissus and Parmenides maintain in opposition to all those people, telling us that all things are a Unity which stays still within itself, having no room to move in. How are we to deal with all these combatants? For, little by little, our

[1] Reading *οἷον* (for *οἴον*), *ἀκίνητον τελέθει. τῷ παντὶ ὄνομ' εἶναι.* There is no reason to doubt that this verse stood in the text of Parmenides used by Plato and Simplicius, who twice quotes it, without reference to the *Theaetetus*, at *Phys.* 29, 15 and 143, 8. Both must have understood it as above translated. The sense is good and relevant. I cannot believe that Plato concocted the verse from the two halves of frag. 8, 38, *ἐπεὶ τό γε Μοῖρ' ἐπέδησεν | οὖλον ἀκίνητόν τ' ἔμεναι· τῷ πάντ(α) ὄνομ' ἔσται | ὅσσα βροτοὶ κατέθεντο, κτλ*, which belong to different sentences and have a quite different meaning.

I suggest, however, that Parmenides' text itself was corrupt. *τελέθειν* is not used by the Pre-Socratics in the sense 'to be'. I conjecture *τε θέλει*, and supply as the only possible subject of *θέλει* logical Necessity (*Ἀνάγκη* or *Δίκη* or *Μοῖρα*). Cf. Heracl. 65: *ἓν τὸ σοφὸν μοῦνον λέγεσθαι οὐκ ἐθέλει καὶ ἐθέλει Ζηνὸς ὄνομα.* The verse can then be placed after frag. 19 at the end of the poem:

> *οὕτω τοι κατὰ δόξαν ἔφυ τάδε καί νυν ἔασι*
> *καὶ μετέπειτ' ἀπὸ τοῦδε τελευτήσουσι τραφέντα·*
> *τοῖς δ' ὄνομ' ἄνθρωποι κατέθεντ' ἐπίσημον ἑκάστῳ.*
> *‹τούτων οὐδενὶ πίστις ἔνι· μοῦνον γὰρ Ἀνάγκη›*
> *οἷον ἀκίνητόν τε θέλει τῷ παντὶ ὄνομ' εἶναι.*

'Men have given many names to changing things; but all these names are false; for Necessity is willing that the All should *only* be called one and immovable.' This makes a good ending. If we now suppose that the text used by Plato and Simplicius had been corrupted and corrected into *μοῦνον γὰρ ἀνάγκη | οἷον, ἀκίνητον τελέθει. τῷ παντὶ ὄνομ' εἶναι*, we have the verse quoted, independently and correctly, by Plato and Simplicius, as Parmenides' last word on the unity and changelessness of Being (see *Classical Review*, 1935, A New Fragment of Parmenides).

180E. advance has brought us, without our knowing it, between the two lines ; and, unless we can somehow fend them off and
181. slip through, we shall suffer for it, as in that game they play in the wrestling schools, where the players are caught by both sides and dragged both ways at once across the line. The best plan, I think, will be to begin by taking a look at the party whom we first approached, the men of Flux ; and if there seems to be anything in what they say, we will help them to pull us over to their side and try to elude the others ; but if we find more truth in the partisans of the immovable whole, we will desert to them from these revolu-
B. tionaries who leave no landmark unremoved. If both sides turn out to be quite unreasonable, we shall merely look foolish if we suppose that nobodies like ourselves can make any contribution after rejecting such paragons of ancient wisdom. Do you think it worth while to go further in the teeth of such danger, Theodorus ?

THEOD. Certainly, Socrates ; I could not bear to stop before we have found out what each of the two parties means.

Theodorus' vigorous outburst perhaps expresses Plato's impatience with the later followers of Heracleitus, who appear to have copied with exaggeration their master's use of cryptic aphorisms and reiterated his doctrine of flux without contributing anything more than emphasis. The Heracleitean position that is to be examined is the extreme position, comparable to the equally extreme denial of all motion and change by Parmenides. Plato's own task was to discover what elements of truth each party was trying to express. Parmenides will be reserved for the *Sophist*. The *Theaetetus*, being concerned with the sensible world, deals with Heracleitus, whose doctrine has its application in that world.

181B–183C. *Criticism of extreme Heracleiteanism*

Socrates opens his criticism of Heracleitus by drawing the distinction between two kinds of change : local motion and change of quality. At *Parmenides* 138B these were declared to be the only two species of change. The word for change of quality (ἀλλοιοῦσθαι) occurs in Heracleitus himself : ' God is day and night, winter and summer, war and peace, surfeit and hunger ; he changes (ἀλλοιοῦται) just as fire, when blended with spices, is named according to the savour of each ' (36 Byw., 67 Diels). Whether the later Heracleiteans drew this distinction or not, they appear to have denied any kind of rest or fixity.

181B. SOCR. Well, if you feel so strongly about it, we must look into the matter. I think our study of change should begin
C. with the question: What after all do they mean when they say all things are in change? What I mean is this: Do they recognise one kind of change or two? I think there are two; but I must not be alone in my opinion; you must take your share in the risk, so that we may meet together whatever fate shall befall us. Tell me: do you call it change when something removes from place to place or revolves in the same place?

THEOD. Yes.

SOCR. Let that be one kind, then. Now suppose a thing
D. stays in the same place but grows old or turns black instead of white or hard instead of soft or alters in some other way, isn't it proper to call that a different kind of change?

THEOD. Yes, it must be.

SOCR. So I should recognise these as two kinds of change —alteration and local movement.

THEOD. And you are right.

SOCR. Having made that distinction, then, let us now begin our talk with these people who say that everything is in change and ask them: Do you say everything is in
E. both sorts of change—both moving in place and altering —or that part changes in both ways, part in only one of the two?

THEOD. I really cannot tell; but I think they would say 'in both ways'.

SOCR. Yes, my friend; otherwise they will find things at rest as well as things in change, and it will be no more correct to say that everything is changing than to say that everything is at rest.

THEOD. Quite true.

SOCR. So, since they are to be in change and unchangingness
182. must be impossible anywhere, all things are always in every kind of change.

THEOD. That follows.

The theory of the nature of sense-perception, stated earlier, is now included in the position we are examining. Judgment, as distinct from sense-perception, has already been disposed of in the criticism of Protagoras. Being fallible, judgment (as Theaetetus will remark later, 187B) cannot be simply identified with knowledge. So the discussion has now been narrowed down to the question: Can sense-perception, whose infallibility has been admitted, give us know-

ledge? Plato stands by his analysis of sense-perception, which is now recalled. It is still attributed to those more refined thinkers who have been alleged to hold the doctrine of flux. That doctrine was originally stated without any reservation as applying to 'all things'. Plato has now to point out that, if the objects of perception (to which it does, in his opinion, apply) are taken to be 'all things', there can be no such thing as knowledge at all, since no statement we make about these perpetually changing things can remain true for two moments together. All discourse will be impossible, since there will be no fixed and stable things for our words to refer to.

182A. SOCR. Now consider this point in their theory. The account they gave of the genesis of hotness or whiteness or whatever it may be, we stated—didn't we?—in this sort of way: that any one of these things is something that moves in place, simultaneously with a perception, between agent and patient; and that the patient becomes perceptive, not a perception, while the agent comes to have a quality, rather than to be a quality. Perhaps this word 'quality' strikes you as queer and uncouth and you don't understand it as a general expression [1]; so let me give particular instances.

B. The agent does not become hotness or whiteness, but hot or white, and so on with all the rest. No doubt you remember how we put this earlier: that nothing has any being as one thing just by itself, no more has the agent or patient, but, as a consequence of their intercourse with one another, in giving birth to the perceptions and the things perceived, the agents come to be of such and such a quality, and the patients come to be percipient.

THEOD. I remember, of course.

The reference is to the statement (156E) that 'white', 'hot', 'hard', etc., have no being just by themselves, and that the agent (as such) and the patient (as such) do not exist until the external object and the sense-organ come within range of one another and the 'quick movements' begin to pass between them. Such being the process of perception, Socrates now takes objects and perceptions separately, beginning with objects.

[1] This is the first occurrence in Greek of the substantive ποιότης, though the corresponding adjective ποῖος, 'of what sort', or 'nature' or 'character', was in common use. The word was coined as a general term for all characters like 'hotness', 'whiteness', 'heaviness', etc., the termination -της corresponding to '-ness' in English.

182C. SOCR. Very well, then, we will not inquire into other parts of their theory, whether they mean this or that, but keep to the point we have in view and ask them this : All things, by your account, are in a perpetual stream of change. Is that so ?

THEOD. Yes.

SOCR. With both the kinds of change we distinguished—both moving in place and altering ?

THEOD. Certainly, if they are to be completely in change.

SOCR. Well now, if they only moved in place without altering in quality, we should be able to say what qualities they have as they move in this stream, shouldn't we ?

THEOD. Yes.

D. SOCR. Since, however, there is nothing constant here either —the flowing thing does not flow white but changes, so that the very whiteness itself flows and shifts into another colour, in order that the thing may escape the charge of constancy in that respect—can we ever give it the name of any colour and be sure that we are naming it rightly ?

THEOD. How can that be done, Socrates ? Or how can anything else of the kind you mean be called by its right name, if, while we are speaking, it is all the time slipping away from us in this stream ?

SOCR. And again, what are we to say of a perception of any sort ; for instance, the perception of seeing or hearing ?

E. Are we to say that it ever abides in its own nature as seeing or hearing ?

THEOD. It certainly ought not, if all things are in change.

SOCR. Then it has no right to be called seeing, any more than not-seeing, nor is any other perception entitled to be called perception rather than not-perception, if everything is changing in every kind of way.

THEOD. No, it hasn't.

SOCR. And moreover perception is knowledge, according to Theaetetus and me.

THEOD. Yes, you did say so.

SOCR. In that case, our answer to the question, what knowledge is, did not mean knowledge any more than not-knowledge.

183. THEOD. So it appears.

The latter part of this argument, dealing with perception, seems at first sight less cogent than the part concerned with objects. It might be objected that, though the organ of sight and the percep-

tion (seeing) may be changing all the time, that does not mean that seeing ceases to be seeing and might as well be called ' not-seeing '. Theaetetus' identification of perception with knowledge meant that every individual act of perception is infallible awareness of something that exists. This is not disproved by pointing out that the perception and its object are always changing. The total complex —perception + object—may be changing, but if it yields knowledge at any moment, it does so at all moments. We are merely aware of slightly different objects in a slightly different way from moment to moment ; but each new perception is just as infallible as the last. The fact of change does not make perception cease to be perception, or, if it ever is knowledge, cease to be knowledge.

The extreme Heracleitean, however, cannot make this reply. It would mean that my perception, though changing in content, remains the same in so far as it always has the character of being perception and knowledge. But the Heracleitean says that nothing ever remains the same. Plato's point is that, if ' all things ' without exception are always changing, language can have no fixed meaning. In the statement ' Perception is knowledge ' the meanings of the words must be constantly shifting. So the statement cannot remain true or the same statement.

The Heracleitean Cratylus, who influenced Plato in his youth, did in fact reach this conclusion. Aristotle says that thinkers who identified the real with the sensible world concluded that ' to seek truth would be to chase a flying bird '. ' They saw that all this world of nature is in movement and that about that which changes no true statement can be made ; at least, regarding that which everywhere in every respect is changing nothing could be truly affirmed. It was this belief that blossomed into the most extreme of the views above mentioned, that of the professed Heracleiteans, such as was held by Cratylus, who finally did not think it right to say anything but only moved his finger, and criticised Heracleitus for saying that it is impossible to step twice into the same river ; for *he* thought one could not do it even once.' [1] The conclusion Plato means us to draw is this : unless we recognise some class of knowable entities exempt from the Heracleitean flux and so capable of standing as the fixed meanings of words, no definition of knowledge can be any more true than its contradictory. Plato is determined to make us feel the need of his Forms without mentioning them. Without the Forms, as his Parmenides said,[2] there can be no discourse. The same conclusion had already been stated at the end of the *Cratylus*.

[1] Ar., *Metaph.* 1010*a*, 7, trans. Ross.

[2] See Introd., p. 11.

183A. SOCR. That would be a pretty result of the improvement we made upon that first answer,[1] when we were so eager to prove it right by showing that everything is in change. Now it seems that what has in fact come to light is that, if all things are in change, any answer that can be given to any question is equally right: you may say it is so and it is not so—or 'becomes', if you prefer to avoid any term that would bring these people to a standstill.

THEOD. You are right.

SOCR. Except, Theodorus, that I used the words 'so' and 'not so', whereas we have no right to use this word 'so'—what is 'so' would cease to be in change—nor yet 'not so':

B. there is no change in that either. Some new dialect will have to be instituted for the exponents of this theory, since, as it is, they have no phrases to fit their fundamental proposition—unless indeed it were 'not even no-how'.[2] That might be an expression indefinite enough to suit them.

THEOD. A most appropriate idiom.

SOCR. So, Theodorus, we are quit of your old friend, and not yet ready to concede to him that every man is the

C. measure of all things, if he is not a wise man. Also, we shall not admit that knowledge is perception, at least on the basis of the theory that all things are in change, unless Theaetetus has some objection.

THEOD. That is excellent, Socrates; for now these questions are disposed of, it was agreed that I should be quit of answering your questions, as soon as the discussion of Protagoras' theory should come to an end.

Two conclusions are here carefully stated. By the argument that the wise man is a better judge of what will be in the future we have disposed of Protagoras' doctrine as extended to judgments; but in the restricted sphere of sense-perception our application of his principle still stands. Theaetetus' proposition, that perception is knowledge, has been refuted '*on the basis of the theory that all things*

[1] Viz. that knowledge is the same as perception.

[2] The text is corrupt. οὐδ' οὕτως (W) cannot be right, since οὐχ οὕτω has already been rejected as not indefinite enough. οὐδ' ὅπως (BT) is not Greek for 'No-how' (οὐδ' ὁπωσοῦν, or ὁπωστιοῦν). If some still more negative expression is needed—'not even nohow' (cf. τὸ οὐδ' οὐδέν, 180A)—we might conjecture οὐδ' οὐδέπως, a form as possible as οὐδέποτε or οὐδέπω, which Plato might coin for this occasion (οὔπως being poetic). Another possibility is οὐ<κ οἱ>δ' ὅπως, *nescio quomodo*, involving a pun on ἄπειρον = 'indefinite' and ἄπειρον = 'ignorant' (as at *Tim.* 55C and *Phileb.* 17E). Pending a better suggestion, δ' οὕτως after μάλιστα should be retained.

are in change'—the extreme Heracleitean position—but only on that basis. The theory of the nature of perception is not abandoned; on the contrary it is used to disprove the claim of perception to be knowledge. It is true that the organs and objects of perception are always changing; and if this were (as Theaetetus held) the only form of cognition, there would be no knowledge. Knowledge requires terms that will have a fixed meaning and truths that will remain true.

The upshot of this section is that Plato has disentangled the application of the flux doctrine to sensible things, which he accepts, from the unrestricted assertion, 'All things whatsoever are in change', which he rejects. The conclusion would be more obvious, if it were not his plan to exclude mention of the Forms—the things which are not in change and can be known.

183c–184b. *Interlude. Socrates declines to criticise Parmenides*

Socrates now declines to discuss the equally extreme Eleatic doctrine that all motion and change is an illusion. The criticism of Parmenides is reserved for the *Sophist*, where the world of unchanging reality will be allowed to come into view.

183c. THEAET. No, Theodorus, you must not be released until
d. you and Socrates, as you proposed just now, have discussed those others who assert that the whole of things is at rest.
THEOD. Would you teach your elders, Theaetetus, to dishonour their agreements? No, for what remains you must prepare yourself to carry on the argument with Socrates.
THEAET. Yes, if he wishes; though I would much rather have been a listener while this subject is discussed.
THEOD. To invite Socrates to an argument is like inviting cavalry to fight on level ground. You will have something to listen to, if you question him.
SOCR. Well, but, Theodorus, I think I shall not comply
e. with Theaetetus' request.
THEOD. Not comply? What do you mean?
SOCR. A feeling of respect keeps me from treating in an unworthy spirit Melissus and the others who say the universe is one and at rest; but there is one being[1] whom I respect above all: Parmenides himself is in my eyes, as Homer says, a 'reverend and awful' figure. I met him when I was quite young and he quite elderly, and I thought there

[1] I suspect a sort of pun on ἕνα ὄντα *Παρμενίδην* and the ἓν ὄν he believed in. (So Diès, p. 123.)

184. was a sort of depth in him that was altogether noble.[1] I am afraid we might not understand his words and still less follow the thought they express. Above all, the original purpose of our discussion—the nature of knowledge—might be thrust out of sight, if we attend to these importunate topics that keep breaking in upon us. In particular, this subject we are raising now is of vast extent. It cannot be fairly treated as a side issue ; and an adequate handling would take so long that we should lose sight of our question about knowledge. Either course would be wrong. My business is rather to try, by means of my
B. midwife's art, to deliver Theaetetus of his conceptions about knowledge.

THEOD. Well, do so, if you think that best.

184B–186E. *'Perception is Knowledge' finally disproved*

Plato has now eliminated those elements in Protagoras' doctrine and in Heracleiteanism which he will not accept. There remain those which he does accept and has included in his own theory of the nature of perception. He can now consider the claim of perception to be identical with knowledge. This claim, as advanced by Theaetetus, strictly implies not only that perception is knowledge, but that it is the whole of knowledge. The following refutation proves (1) that perception cannot be the whole of knowledge, for a great part of what is always called knowledge consists of truths involving terms which are not objects of perception ; and (2) that, even within its own sphere, the objects of perception have not that true reality which the objects of knowledge must possess. Hence, so far from being co-extensive with knowledge, perception is not knowledge at all.

(1) *Perception is not the whole of knowledge.*—The first argument does not depend on the details of Plato's theory of sense-perception. Such a theory, he would hold, can never be more than a probable account which might need amendment. But even if it be not accepted, he can still show that perception, in the strict sense which is taken to exclude judgment, cannot be the whole of knowledge.

184B. SOCR. Well then, Theaetetus, here is a point for you to consider. The answer you gave was that knowledge is perception, wasn't it ?

THEAET. Yes.

[1] For this reference to the meeting described in the *Parmenides*, see Introd., p. 1.

184B. SOCR. Now suppose you were asked: 'When a man sees white or black things or hears high or low tones, what does he see or hear with?' I suppose you would say: 'With eyes and ears'.

THEAET. Yes, I should.

C. SOCR. To use words and phrases in an easy-going way without scrutinising them too curiously is not, in general, a mark of ill-breeding; on the contrary there is something low-bred in being too precise. But sometimes there is no help for it, and this is a case in which I must take exception to the form of your answer. Consider: is it more correct to say that we see and hear *with* our eyes and ears or *through* them?

THEAET. I should say we always perceive through them, rather than with them.

D. SOCR. Yes; it would surely be strange that there should be a number of senses ensconced inside us, like the warriors in the Trojan horse, and all these things should not converge and meet in some single nature—a mind, or whatever it is to be called—*with* which we perceive all the objects of perception *through* the senses as instruments.

THEAET. Yes, I think that is a better description.

SOCR. My object in being so precise is to know whether there is some part of ourselves, the same in all cases, with which we apprehend black or white through the eyes, and

E. objects of other kinds through the other senses. Can you, if the question is put to you, refer all such acts of apprehension to the body? Perhaps, however, it would be better you should speak for yourself in reply to questions, instead of my taking the words out of your mouth. Tell me: all these instruments through which you perceive what is warm or hard or light or sweet are parts of the body, aren't they?—not of anything else.

THEAET. Of nothing else.

SOCR. Now will you also agree that the objects you per-

185. ceive through one faculty cannot be perceived through another—objects of hearing, for instance, through sight, or objects of sight through hearing?

THEAET. Of course I will.

SOCR. Then, if you have some thought about both objects at once, you cannot be having a perception including both at once through either the one or the other organ.

THEAET. No.

SOCR. Now take sound and colour. Have you not, to

185. begin with, this thought which includes both at once—that they both *exist*?

THEAET. I have.

SOCR. And, further, that each of the two is *different* from the other and the *same* as itself?

B. THEAET. Naturally.

SOCR. And again, that both together are *two*, and each of them is *one*?

THEAET. Yes.

SOCR. And also you can ask yourself whether they are *unlike* each other or *alike*?

THEAET. No doubt.

SOCR. Then through what organ do you think all this about them both? What is common to them both cannot be apprehended either through hearing or through sight. Besides, here is further evidence for my point. Suppose it were possible to inquire whether sound and colour were both brackish or not, no doubt you could tell me what

C. faculty you would use—obviously not sight or hearing, but some other.

THEAET. Of course: the faculty that works through the tongue.

SOCR. Very good. But now, through what organ does that faculty work, which tells you what is common not only to these objects but to all things—what you mean by the words 'exists' and 'does not exist' and the other terms applied to them in the questions I put a moment ago? What sort of organs can you mention, corresponding to all these terms, through which the perceiving part of us perceives each one of them?

THEAET. You mean existence and non-existence, likeness and unlikeness, sameness and difference, and also unity

D. and numbers in general as applied to them; and clearly your question covers 'even' and 'odd' and all that kind of notions. You are asking, through what part of the body our mind perceives these?

SOCR. You follow me most admirably, Theaetetus; that is exactly my question.

THEAET. Really, Socrates, I could not say, except that I think there is no special organ at all for these things, as there is for the others. It is clear to me that the mind

E. in itself is its own instrument for contemplating the common terms that apply to everything.

SOCR. In fact, Theaetetus, you are handsome, not ugly

185E. as Theodorus said you were; for in a discussion handsome is that handsome does. And you have treated me more than handsomely in saving me the trouble of a very long argument, if it is clear to you that the mind contemplates some things through its own instrumentality, others through the bodily faculties. That was indeed what I thought myself; but I wanted you to agree.

186. THEAET. Well, it is clear to me.

In this argument, for the first time, we go behind the earlier account of sense-perception, which regarded the subject as no more than a bundle of distinct sense-organs, and sense-perception as a process occurring between organ and external object. That account stands; but it is now added that, behind the separate organs, there must be a mind, centrally receiving their several reports and capable of reflecting upon the data of sense and making judgments. In these judgments the thinking mind uses terms like 'exists', 'is the same as', 'is different from', which are not objects of perception reaching the mind through the channel of any special sense, but are 'common' to all the objects of sense. The mind gains its acquaintance with the meaning of such terms through its own instrumentality, not by the commerce between bodily organs and objects.

These terms are called 'common' (*κοινά*) in contrast with the 'private' (*ἴδια*) or 'peculiar' objects of the several senses. 'Common' means no more than that. They are not to be confused with the 'common sensibles' which Aristotle regarded as the objects of a common sensorium seated in the heart, namely objects perceptible by more than one sense, such as motion, shape, number, size, time. Plato does not speak of a 'common sense' (*κοινὴ αἴσθησις*), but on the contrary insists that his common terms are apprehended, not by any sense, but by thought. The judgments involving them are made by the mind, thinking by itself, without any special bodily organ. The terms are 'common', not in Aristotle's sense, but in the sense in which a name is common to any number of individual things. Thus 'exists' is 'applied in common to all things' (*κοινὸν ἐπὶ πᾶσι*, 185C); it can occur in a statement about any subject you like. Existence, we are presently told (186A), 'attends on' or 'belongs to' all things. These common terms are, in fact, the meanings of common names —what Plato calls 'Forms' or 'Ideas'. The instances given here correspond to the instances given by Socrates in the *Parmenides* (129D), where he says that Zeno's dilemmas could be escaped by 'separating apart by themselves Forms such as likeness and un-

likeness, plurality and unity, rest and motion and all such things '. The terms there mentioned happen to be those which occurred in Zeno's arguments against plurality and motion; Socrates adds later (130B) the moral Forms ' beautiful, good, and all such things ', just as he will presently add them here (186A).[1] In the *Theaetetus* Plato is determined to say as little as possible about the Forms, and he here avoids using the word; but that these ' common ' terms simply are Forms should be obvious to anyone who has read the *Parmenides*. The avoidance of the word has misled many critics into asserting that the Forms are not mentioned in the *Theaetetus*, and miscalling these common terms ' categories '.[2]

Plato could not press the argument further in this direction without openly discussing the Forms as the true objects of knowledge. But the inference is clear: that percepts cannot be the only objects of knowledge, as the identification of knowledge with perception implied. Any statement we can make about the objects of perception, and therefore any truth, must contain at least one of these common terms. Therefore all knowledge of truths, as distinct from immediate acquaintance with sense-data, involves acquaintance with Forms, which are not private objects of perception, not individual existents, not involved in the Heracleitean flux. The reader can now draw the first conclusion: Perception is not the whole of knowledge.

The argument next proceeds to the second conclusion: (2) *Perception, even within its own sphere, is not knowledge at all.*

186A. SOCR. Under which head, then, do you place existence? For that is, above all, a thing that belongs to everything.
THEAET. I should put it among the things that the mind apprehends by itself.
SOCR. And also likeness and unlikeness and sameness and difference?
THEAET. Yes.
SOCR. And how about ' honourable ' and ' dishonourable ' and ' good ' and ' bad '?
THEAET. Those again seem to me, above all, to be things

[1] See Introd., p. 8.

[2] The entirely gratuitous confusion, traceable to Plotinus, of Plato's common terms with Aristotle's categories will be dealt with later (p. 274), where some of the common terms come up again for discussion. The moderns add a further confusion with the quite different use of ' category ' by Kant and others. Campbell (p. liii), for instance, speaks of ' necessary forms of thought which are as inseparable from perception as from reasoning '. The common terms are not forms of thought, but objects of thought (νοητά), and they are separable from perception.

186A. whose being is considered, one in comparison with another, by the mind, when it reflects within itself upon the past
B. and the present with an eye to the future.[1]

SOCR. Wait a moment. The hardness of something hard and the softness of something soft will be perceived by the mind through touch, will they not?

THEAET. Yes.

SOCR. But their existence and the fact that they both exist, and their contrariety to one another and again the existence of this contrariety are things which the mind itself undertakes to judge for us, when it reflects upon them and compares one with another.

THEAET. Certainly.

SOCR. Is it not true, then, that whereas all the impressions which penetrate to the mind through the body are things
C. which men and animals alike are naturally constituted to perceive from the moment of birth, reflections about them with respect to their existence and usefulness only come, if they come at all, with difficulty through a long and troublesome process of education?

THEAET. Assuredly.

SOCR. Is it possible, then, to reach truth when one cannot reach existence?

THEAET. It is impossible.

SOCR. But if a man cannot reach the truth of a thing, can he possibly know that thing?

D. THEAET. No, Socrates, how could he?

SOCR. If that is so, knowledge does not reside in the impressions, but in our reflection upon them. It is there, seemingly, and not in the impressions, that it is possible to grasp existence and truth.

THEAET. Evidently.

SOCR. Then are you going to give the same name to two things which differ so widely?

THEAET. Surely that would not be right.

SOCR. Well then, what name do you give to the first one —to seeing, hearing, smelling, feeling cold and feeling warm?

[1] Theaetetus seems to be thinking of the recent argument against Protagoras, turning on the question of judgments about the comparative goodness or badness of future effects, and what *will* seem honourable (laudable) or dishonourable customs to a State. Socrates stops him short and applies his statement to the contrasts of sense qualities. Touch can show us that this is hard, that soft; but it is thought, not sense, that reflects upon the contrast of hard and soft.

186E. THEAET. Perceiving. What other name is there for it?
SOCR. Taking it all together, then, you call this perception?
THEAET. Necessarily.
SOCR. A thing which, we agree, has no part in apprehending truth, since it has none in apprehending existence.
THEAET. No, it has none.
SOCR. Nor, consequently, in knowledge either.
THEAET. No.
SOCR. Then, Theaetetus, perception and knowledge cannot possibly be the same thing.
THEAET. Evidently not, Socrates. Indeed, it is now perfectly plain that knowledge is something different from perception.

Such is the final disproof of the claim of perception to be knowledge. Though admitted to be, in a sense, infallible, perception has not the second mark of knowledge: it cannot apprehend existence and truth. There is a certain ambiguity about the words 'existence' (*οὐσία*) and 'truth' (*ἀλήθεια*): both are commonly used by Plato to mean that true reality which he ascribes to Forms and denies to sensible objects. If we keep to the sense suggested by the previous context, the statement should mean that the simplest judgment, such as 'Green exists here', is beyond the scope of perception proper, our immediate awareness of green. The faculty of perception has no cognizance of the meaning of the word 'exists'; and, since only judgments or statements can be true, all truths are beyond its scope.

To the Platonist, however, who is familiar with the associations of 'reality' and 'truth', the passage will mean more than this. The statement that reflections on the existence or usefulness of our sense-impressions come only, if at all, after a long and troublesome education seems at first sight to conflict with the argument for Recollection in the *Phaedo*, where it was asserted that from the time when we first begin to use our senses we make judgments involving Forms, which we must therefore have known before birth. All judgments involve the use of some common term; and Plato cannot mean to deny here that uneducated people make judgments. Plainly he means that they have not such knowledge of Forms as the dialectician gains by the long process of education described in *Republic* vii. And the *Phaedo* may only mean that, though children do make judgments such as 'This is like that' and mean something by them, they have only a dim and confused apprehension of Forms such as likeness. The advance to knowledge is a gradual recovery of clear vision, possible only by a training in dialectic.

II. THE CLAIM OF TRUE JUDGMENT

The conclusion suggested earlier was that perception cannot be the whole of knowledge because there are other objects—the common terms—which the mind must know if it is to reflect at all. If we now take account of the Platonic sense of ' reality and truth ', we can add a further inference. Even my direct perception of my own sense-object cannot be called ' knowledge ', because the object is not a thing which is unchangingly real, but only something that becomes and is always changing. Some might say that they are more certain of the sensations and perceptions they have at any moment than they are of anything else ; and to deny the name of knowledge to such direct acquaintance is, in a sense, a matter of terminology. But to Plato knowledge, by definition, has the real for its object, and these objects have not true and permanent being. This point, however, cannot be elaborated without entering on an account of the intelligible world. Hence a certain ambiguity is allowed to remain about the meaning of ' reaching truth (reality) and existence '.

II. The Claim of True Judgment to be Knowledge

187A–C. *Theaetetus states the claim of True Judgment*

In the foregoing argument against Protagoras the distinction between direct perception and judgment has gradually emerged. Theaetetus has been led to see that knowledge must be sought above the level of mere sensation or perception, somewhere in the field of that ' thinking ' or ' judging ' which has been described as an activity of the mind ' by itself ', exercised upon the reports of the senses and using the common terms. Judgments may be true or false. Theaetetus' next suggestion is that any judgment that is true is entitled to be called knowledge.

187A. SOCR. But when we began our talk it was certainly not our object to find out what knowledge is not, but what it is. Still, we have advanced so far as to see that we must not look for it in sense-perception at all, but in what goes on when the mind is occupied with things by itself, whatever name you give to that.

THEAET. Well, Socrates, the name for that, I imagine, is ' making judgments '.

SOCR. You are right, my friend. Now begin all over
B. again. Blot out all we have been saying, and see if you can get a clearer view from the position you have now reached. Tell us once more what knowledge is.

THEAET. I cannot say it is judgment as a whole, because

187B. there is false judgment; but perhaps true judgment is knowledge. You may take that as my answer. If, as we go further, it turns out to be less convincing than it seems now, I will try to find another.

SOCR. Good, Theaetetus; this promptness is much better than hanging back as you did at first. If we go on like
C. this, either we shall find what we are after, or we shall be less inclined to imagine we know something of which we know nothing whatever; and that surely is a reward not to be despised. And now, what is this you say: that there are two sorts of judgment, one true, the other false, and you define knowledge as judgment that is true?

THEAET. Yes; that is the view I have come to now.

The word (δοξάζειν) above translated 'making judgments' has been loosely used earlier for thinking or reflection of any sort that goes on in the mind 'by itself'. Judgment (δόξα) will be more precisely defined presently (190A) as the decision terminating the mind's inward debate with itself. But the verb continues to be used as a synonym for thinking generally and even for 'thinking of' some object. The translation will follow Plato in using whatever expression seems most natural in each context.

187C–E. *How is false judgment possible?*

Instead of developing and criticising Theaetetus' new suggestion, Socrates here goes back to a point that arose in the Defence of Protagoras. Almost the whole of this section of the dialogue will be devoted to attempts to account for the possibility of false judgment. At 167A Protagoras said that no one can judge falsely; 'for it is not possible either to think the thing that is not or to think anything but what one experiences, and all experiences are true'. So far, our only reply to this has been to argue *ad hominem* that if all judgments are true, Protagoras refutes himself, and that two contradictory judgments about a future fact which is not now part of 'what one experiences', cannot both be true. We have not shown that it is possible to 'think the thing that is not'; and if it is not possible, Protagoras could reply that then all judgments must be true and his position is unassailable by such arguments.

In the next dialogue, the Sophist whom we attempt to define will be found taking refuge in this position; and he is not finally dislodged from it till near the end, where the introduction of the theory of Forms at last provides a satisfactory definition of false statement and judgment. The *Theaetetus* is leaving the Forms out

of account so far as possible, and the long analysis here given of the problem of false judgment cannot, accordingly, yield a complete solution. Its object is to explore the ground within the field of the present discussion and to see how far we can get towards an explanation of false judgment without invoking the Forms.

187C. SOCR. Then, had we better go back to a point that came up about judgment?

THEAET. What point do you mean?

D. SOCR. A question that worries me now, as often before, and has much perplexed me in my own mind and also in talking to others. I cannot explain the nature of this experience we have, or how it can arise in our minds.

THEAET. What experience?

SOCR. Making a false judgment. At this moment I am still in doubt and wondering whether to let that question alone or to follow it further, not as we did a while ago, but in a new way.

THEAET. Why not, Socrates, if it seems to be in the least necessary? Only just now, when you and Theodorus were speaking of leisure, you said very rightly that there is no pressing hurry in a discussion of this sort.

E. SOCR. A good reminder; for this may be the right moment to go back upon our track. It is better to carry through a small task well than make a bad job of a big one.

THEAET. Certainly it is.

187E–188C. *False Judgment as thinking that one thing* (*known or unknown*) *is another thing* (*known or unknown*)

Socrates opens up this new problem with two arguments showing that false judgment cannot be explained if we limit the discussion to the terms in which it was commonly debated by contemporary Sophists. Plato, as often, begins with a simple and naive view which ignores certain relevant factors, and gradually brings these factors in. The whole discussion, however, as we shall see, is limited by certain fundamental premisses, which are not Plato's own. He is criticising other people's attempts to account for the existence of false judgments, and the conclusion is negative: they have failed to explain it, and must fail so long as those premisses are assumed.

(1) If we accept the dilemma that anything must be either known to us or (totally) unknown, it is hard, Socrates argues, to see how we can ever think that one thing (whether known to us or not) can be another thing (whether known to us or not), i.e. *mistake* one thing for another.

187E. SOCR. How shall we set about it, then? What is it that we do mean? Do we assert that there is in every case a false judgment, and that one of us thinks what is false, another what is true, such being the nature of things?

THEAET. Certainly we do.

188. SOCR. And, in each and all cases, it is possible for us either to know a thing or not to know it? I leave out of account for the moment becoming acquainted with things and forgetting, considered as falling between the two. Our argument is not concerned with them just now.

THEAET. Well then, Socrates, there is no third alternative left in any case, besides knowing and not knowing.

SOCR. And it follows at once that when one is thinking he must be thinking either of something he knows or of something he does not know?

THEAET. Necessarily.

SOCR. And further, if you know a thing, you cannot also

B. not know it; and if you do not know it, you cannot also know it?

THEAET. Of course.[1]

SOCR. Then is the man who thinks what is false supposing that things he knows are not those things but other things he knows, so that, while he knows both, he fails to recognise either?[2]

THEAET. No, that is impossible, Socrates.

SOCR. Well then, is he supposing that things he does *not* know are other things he does not know? Is this possible—that a man who knows neither Theaetetus nor Socrates should take it into his head that Socrates is Theaetetus or Theaetetus Socrates?

C. THEAET. No. How could he?

SOCR. But surely a man does not imagine that things he does know are things he does not know, or that things he does not know are things he knows?

THEAET. No, that would be a miracle.

SOCR. What other way is there, then, of judging falsely? There is, presumably, no possibility of judging outside these alternatives, granted that everything is either known by us

[1] This apparently obvious admission is retracted later (191A). There is a sense in which you do not know (are not now conscious of) what you do know (have become acquainted with and possess stored somewhere in your memory).

[2] ἀγνοεῖν means both 'fail to recognise' and 'be ignorant of'. No English expression covers both meanings.

188c. or not known; and inside them there seems to be no room for a false judgment.

THEAET. Quite true.

The limitations of this argument are obvious. As the illustration shows, 'to know' is used in the sense in which I am said to know, not a truth, but a person or an object formerly seen and now remembered. We can divide all things into those we know in this sense and those we do not; and we can ignore any processes of becoming acquainted and forgetting. The argument is that I cannot think that a friend is a total stranger, or that one stranger is another stranger, or that one friend is another friend. False judgments are never of that pattern. Three points are to be noted.

(1) The field is limited to judgments of the form asserting that one thing is (identical with) another—that Theaetetus is Socrates. Very few false judgments consist in mistaking one thing for another; but this limitation was characteristic of sophistic discussion of the question, partly because, as Apelt observes, the formula 'one thing is another' (*τὸ ἕτερον ἕτερον εἶναι*) was the Greek equivalent for our '*x* is *A*', where *x* is subject, *A* predicate. This led to the confusion of commoner types of proposition with assertions of identity. It is not to be supposed, however, that Plato was guilty of this confusion.

(2) The discussion is psychological, rather than logical. It is argued that we never in fact think that Theaetetus whom we know is Socrates whom we also know. It is true that when two known objects are clearly before the mind we do not judge that one is the other. Logicians, however, might maintain that there is a false 'proposition': 'Theaetetus is identical with Socrates', which has a meaning, though I cannot believe it. With that we are not concerned, but only with judgments and statements that can be actually made and believed by some rational being. Plato never discusses 'propositions' that no one propounds.[1]

(3) When we come to objects that are unknown (things I have never been acquainted with), it may be urged that I can identify one unknown object with another: I can judge (truly or falsely) that Sir Philip Francis was the author of the Letters of Junius. Nearly all historical knowledge is about things unknown to us in the present sense. But the argument assumes that, unless I 'know' an object, my mind must be a complete blank with respect to it, as it is with respect to a person I have never seen or heard of.

[1] Hence in translating Plato the unhappy word 'proposition' should be avoided where modern associations are likely to obtrude themselves. See below, p. 265.

Plato was not blind to these considerations. The only conclusion, so far, is that so long as we confine the question to these very narrow limits, we cannot explain the occurrence of false judgment.

188c–189B. *False Judgment as thinking the thing that is not*

The second argument develops the current objection to the possibility of 'thinking the thing that is not'—a phrase which Protagoras used as equivalent to 'judging falsely' (167A).

188c. SOCR. Perhaps, then, we had better approach what we are looking for by way of another alternative. Instead of
D. 'knowing or not knowing', let us take 'being or not being'.

THEAET. How do you mean?

SOCR. May it not simply be that one who thinks *what is not* about anything cannot but be thinking what is false, whatever his state of mind may be in other respects?

THEAET. There is some likelihood in that, Socrates.

SOCR. Then what shall we say, Theaetetus, if we are asked: 'But is what you describe possible for anyone? Can any man think what is not, either about something that is or absolutely?' I suppose we must answer to that: 'Yes,
E. when he believes something and what he believes is not true.' Or what are we to say?

THEAET. We must say that.

SOCR. Then is the same sort of thing possible in any other case?

THEAET. What sort of thing?

SOCR. That a man should see something, and yet what he sees should be nothing.

THEAET. No. How could that be?

SOCR. Yet surely if what he sees is something, it must be a thing that is. Or do you suppose that 'something'[1] can be reckoned among things that have no being at all?

THEAET. No, I don't.

SOCR. Then, if he sees something, he sees a thing that is.

THEAET. Evidently.

189. SOCR. And if he hears a thing, he hears something and hears a thing that is.

THEAET. Yes.

[1] The Greek εἴς γέ τις, 'at least some one', is the contradictory of οὐδείς, not even one', 'no one'. ἕν γέ τι means 'a (= one) thing' (*ein Ding, une chose*), as the opposite of 'no-thing'; and τὸ ἕν here means 'what is one' (or 'a thing' in this sense), while τοῖς μὴ οὖσιν means the opposite, 'nothings'.

189. SOCR. And if he touches a thing, he touches something, and if something, then a thing that is.
THEAET. That also is true.
SOCR. And if he thinks,[1] he thinks something, doesn't he?
THEAET. Necessarily.
SOCR. And when he thinks something, he thinks a thing that is?
THEAET. I agree.
SOCR. So to think what is not is to think nothing.
THEAET. Clearly.
SOCR. But surely to think nothing is the same as not to think at all.
THEAET. That seems plain.

B. SOCR. If so, it is impossible to think what is not, either about anything that is, or absolutely.
THEAET. Evidently.
SOCR. Then thinking falsely must be something different from thinking what is not.
THEAET. So it seems.
SOCR. False judgment, then, is no more possible for us on these lines than on those we were following just now.
THEAET. No, it certainly is not.

The problem developed in this argument is not a mere sophistic paradox, but a very real problem that is still being discussed. It will recur in the *Sophist*, where Plato, having brought the Forms upon the scene, will be able to offer a solution.[2] The statement of it is attributed to Protagoras elsewhere[3]: to think what is false is to think what is not; but that is to think nothing; and that, again, is not to think at all: therefore we can only think the thing that is, and all judgments must be true. Such was Protagoras' conclusion. Plato's is different, namely that, since there is such a thing as thinking falsely, it cannot be 'thinking what is not', if that means (as the argument implies) having nothing at all before the mind. But the real significance of 'thinking what is not' cannot be followed up here. It would involve drawing the necessary distinctions between various meanings of the terms 'is' and 'is not', and a discussion of the whole question of reality and unreality. All this is reserved for the *Sophist*, where the inquiry will start again from the problem as stated here, and follow the only line that can lead to a satisfactory conclusion.

[1] Or 'makes a judgment'. Thinks something', again, is not distinguished from 'thinks of something'.

[2] See pp. 212 and 299 ff.

[3] *Euthydemus* 286C and 283E.

Since the limits of the *Theaetetus* exclude a discussion of reality, the present argument has to be left where it is, and the transition to Socrates' next suggestion seems somewhat abrupt. We may, however, find a link, if we observe that the terms in which the debate had been carried on were too simple. Protagoras has been represented earlier (167A) as asserting that 'one cannot think anything but what one experiences, and all experiences are true'. He saw no important distinction between what appears *real* to me in direct perception and what appears *true* to me, what I believe or judge to be true. 'Appears' covered both. So he assumed that belief was like direct acquaintance with a sense-object, and must be infallible in the same way. What I believe, what I have before my mind when I think, must be *something*; so there must *be* just that object or fact; and there are no false facts, any more than non-existent objects.

To escape this conclusion, further analysis is needed to bring out the distinction between direct acquaintance with sense-objects (which Plato has admitted to be infallible) and the process of making a judgment, which is not so simple and immediate as seeing a colour. It will be indicated that judgments of the type so far considered—thinking that one thing is another thing—involve two terms, not to mention the connecting term 'is'. The act of making a judgment is not the same thing as perceiving this whole complex—perceiving a fact as we perceive a colour—but involves an operation of the mind which puts the terms together in a certain way. There may be room for mistakes to occur in this process, the nature of which Socrates will attempt to bring out gradually and to illustrate by images.

189B–190E. *The apparent impossibility of false judgment as mistaking one thing for another*

Socrates now recurs to the conception of false judgment as mistaking one thing for another, or thinking that one thing is another. We are to examine what this can mean and in what circumstances it can occur. Our first conclusion (188C) that it was impossible resulted from the assumption that we must either 'know' a thing (be acquainted with it and have it clearly before our minds) or not know it (be totally unacquainted with it). This dilemma does not really exhaust the possibilities. By taking memory into account, we can find a sense in which an object can be both known and not known.

189B. SOCR. Well, does the thing we call false judgment arise in this way?

THEAET. How?

189B. SOCR. We do recognise the existence of false judgment as a sort of misjudgment,[1] that occurs when a person inter-
C. changes in his mind two things, both of which are, and asserts that the one is the other. In this way he is always thinking of something which is, but of one thing in place of another, and since he misses the mark he may fairly be said to be judging falsely.

THEAET. I believe you have got it quite right now. When a person thinks 'ugly' in place of 'beautiful' or 'beautiful' in place of 'ugly', he is really and truly thinking what is false.

SOCR. I can see that you are no longer in awe of me, Theaetetus, but beginning to despise me.

THEAET. Why, precisely?

SOCR. I believe you think I shall miss the opening you give me by speaking of '*truly* thinking what is *false*', and not
D. ask you whether a thing can be slowly quick or heavily light or whether any contrary can desert its own nature and behave like its opposite. However, I will justify your boldness by letting that pass. So you like this notion that false judgment is mistaking.

THEAET. I do.

Theaetetus' phrase 'thinking (or judging) "ugly" in place of "beautiful"' is vague and ambiguous. We should expect it to mean: thinking that some object which is in fact beautiful is ugly, or (in the language of later logic) assigning a wrong predicate to a subject. But this is not the sense taken in the following context. A discussion of what we call 'predicates' would inevitably lead to the Forms. Possibly Theaetetus' remark is intended to remind us of their existence; but Socrates will not bring them in. The field is still limited to judgments asserting that one (individual) thing is (identical with) another, as when I mistake Theaetetus for Socrates.[2] We are to consider how and when such a mistake can be made.

189D. SOCR. According to you, then, it is possible for the mind to take one thing for another, and not for itself.

THEAET. Yes, it is.

[1] Plato coins a word ἀλλοδοξία, 'misjudgment', analogous to ἀλλογνοεῖν, meaning to mistake one person for another.

[2] Accordingly this hypothesis that false judgment is 'mistaking' must not be confused with Plato's own analysis in the *Sophist*, which depends on the recognition of Forms. See p. 317.

189E. SOCR. And when the mind does that, must it not be thinking either of both things or of one of the two?

THEAET. Certainly it must, either at the same time or one after the other.

SOCR. Excellent. And do you accept my description of the process of thinking?

THEAET. How do you describe it?

SOCR. As a discourse that the mind carries on with itself about any subject it is considering. You must take this explanation as coming from an ignoramus; but I have a notion that, when the mind is thinking, it is simply talking to itself, asking questions and answering them, and saying

190. Yes or No. When it reaches a decision—which may come slowly or in a sudden rush—when doubt is over and the two voices affirm the same thing, then we call that its 'judgment'. So I should describe thinking as discourse, and judgment as a statement pronounced, not aloud to someone else, but silently to oneself.[1]

THEAET. I agree.

SOCR. It seems, then, that when a person thinks of one thing as another, he is affirming to himself that the one is the other.

B. THEAET. Of course.

The effect of this account of thinking and judgment is to equate the act of 'mistaking' one thing for another ('misjudgment', the suggested equivalent of false judgment) with making the silent *statement* (λόγος) that one thing is the other. So Theaetetus' phrase 'judging "ugly" in place of "beautiful"' is reduced to making the statement that the beautiful (*or* what is beautiful) is ugly, or is the same thing as the ugly.[2] We are still considering only judgments of this type, which assert that one thing is another thing. We are supposed to have both things clearly before our minds (memory not having yet come into the discussion). Socrates proceeds to point out that, within the limits of these assumptions, we never do judge that one thing is another.

190B. SOCR. Now search your memory and see if you have ever said to yourself 'Certainly, what is beautiful is ugly', or

[1] This account of the process of thinking and judgment is repeated in the *Sophist* (see p. 318).

[2] Since the Forms are excluded from discussion, this expression 'the beautiful' is left ambiguous. It can mean (1) anything that is beautiful (and recognised as such at the moment), or (2) Beauty itself (the Form). The ambiguity does not matter, because we never judge either that what we now see to be beautiful is ugly or that Beauty itself is Ugliness.

190B. 'what is unjust is just'. To put it generally, consider if you have ever set about convincing yourself that any one thing is certainly another thing, or whether, on the contrary, you have never, even in a dream, gone so far as to say to yourself that odd numbers must be even, or anything of that sort.

THEAET. That is true.

C. SOCR. Do you suppose anyone else, mad or sane, ever goes so far as to talk himself over, in his own mind, into stating seriously that an ox must be a horse or that two must be one?

THEAET. Certainly not.

SOCR. So, if making a statement to oneself is the same as judging, then, so long as a man is making a statement or judgment about both things at once and his mind has hold of both, he cannot say or judge that one of them is the

D. other. You, in your turn, must not cavil at my language [1]; I mean it in the sense that no one thinks: 'the ugly is beautiful' or anything of that kind.

THEAET. I will not cavil, Socrates. I agree with you.

SOCR. So long, then, as a person is thinking of both, he cannot think of the one as the other.

THEAET. So it appears.

SOCR. On the other hand, if he is thinking of one only and not of the other at all,[2] he will never think that the one is the other.

THEAET. True; for then he would have to have before his mind the thing he was not thinking of.

SOCR. It follows, then, that 'mistaking' is impossible, whether he thinks of both things or of one only. So

E. there will be no sense in defining false judgment as 'mis-

[1] Burnet's text. In Greek 'the one' and 'the other' happen to be expressed by the same word, *ἕτερον*. Socrates means: 'You must not cavil at my saying no one thinks one thing (*τὸ ἕτερον*) is another (*ἕτερον*), on the verbal ground that *ἕτερον* is the same word as *ἕτερον*. I mean all the particular cases (such as 'the ugly is beautiful') covered by this general formula.' The words *ἐπὶ τῶν ἐν μέρει, ἐπειδὴ τὸ [ῥῆμα] ἕτερον τῷ ἑτέρῳ κατὰ ῥῆμα ταὐτόν ἐστιν* (B) may be a gloss on *τῇδε*, inserted in the wrong place; or, if retained where they stand, they must mean 'You must let this phrase pass *as applied to the particular cases* (covered by them); *for verbally the word ἕτερον (one) is the same as the word ἕτερον (other)*.' Cf. Madvig, *Adv. Crit.* i (1871), 377; Peipers, *Erkenntnisstheorie Plato's* 694. The *καὶ σοὶ* (with *ἑαυτόν*) means: You must pass my expression as I passed your '*ἀληθῶς ψευδοῦς*' (at 189D).

[2] This sentence shows clearly that *δοξάζειν* (with accus.) here, as in other places in the context, means '*thinking of*' a thing, not making a judgment about it; though *δοξάσει* in the next line does mean *making the judgment* that the one is the other. This is a good example of Plato's deliberate refusal to use terms as fixed technicalities.

190E. judgment '. It does not appear that false judgment exists in us in this form any more than in those we dismissed earlier.
THEAET. So it seems.

The upshot, so far, is that the notion of mistaking or interchanging one object for another will not explain how we can make a false judgment, so long as it is assumed that the objects must either be 'known' (clearly present to the mind) or else 'unknown' (completely absent from the mind).

190E–195B. *One class of mistakes can be explained by taking into account memory. The Wax Tablet*

The notion of 'mistaking', however, need not be abandoned, if the assumption can be evaded; and it can be evaded by introducing what has hitherto been excluded—the contents of the memory. We shall find that there is one class of false judgments that can be described as 'mistaking'. These are judgments in which the two things wrongly identified are objects of different sorts—one a present object of perception, the other a memory-image. So the scope of the discussion is now enlarged to include memory.

190E. SOCR. And yet, Theaetetus, if we cannot show that false judgment does exist, we shall be driven into admitting all sorts of absurdities.
THEAET. For instance?
SOCR. I will not mention them until I have tried to look at the question from every quarter. So long as we cannot see our way, I should feel some shame at our being forced
191. into such admissions. But if we find the way out, then, as soon as we are clear, it will be time to speak of others as caught in the ludicrous position we shall have ourselves escaped; though, if we are completely baffled, then, I suppose, we must be humble and let the argument do with us what it will, like a sailor trampling over sea-sick passengers. So let me tell you where I still see an avenue open for us to follow.
THEAET. Do tell me.
SOCR. I shall say we were wrong to agree that a man cannot think that things he knows are things he does not know and
B. so be deceived. In a way it is possible.
THEAET. Do you mean something that crossed my mind at the moment when we said that was impossible? It occurred to me that sometimes I, who am acquainted with Socrates, imagine that a stranger whom I see at a distance is

191B. the Socrates whom I know. In a case like that a mistake of the kind you describe does occur.

SOCR. And we were shy of saying that, because it would have made us out as both knowing and not knowing what we know?

THEAET. Exactly.

SOCR. We must, in fact, put the case in a different way. Perhaps the barrier will yield somewhere, though it may
C. defy our efforts. Anyhow, we are in such straits that we must turn every argument over and put it to the test. Now, is there anything in this? Is it possible to become acquainted with something one did not know before?

THEAET. Surely.

SOCR. And the process can be repeated with one thing after another?

THEAET. Of course.

SOCR. Imagine, then, for the sake of argument, that our minds contain a block of wax, which in this or that individual may be larger or smaller, and composed of wax that is com-
D. paratively pure or muddy, and harder in some, softer in others, and sometimes of just the right consistency.

THEAET. Very well.

SOCR. Let us call it the gift of the Muses' mother, Memory, and say that whenever we wish to remember something we see or hear or conceive in our own minds, we hold this wax under the perceptions or ideas and imprint them on it as we might stamp the impression of a seal-ring. Whatever is so imprinted we remember and know so long as the image remains; whatever is rubbed out or has not succeeded in
E. leaving an impression we have forgotten and do not know.

THEAET. So be it.

The word 'know' has now received a new meaning: I know a thing when I have had direct acquaintance with it and an image of it remains stored in my memory. This gives a fuller range of possibilities than we have so far had. I may know Socrates in this sense and yet fail to recognise or identify him when I see him; and I may mistake a stranger whom I see at a distance for the Socrates whom I know. This possibility of 'mistaking' was excluded in the earlier argument by the false assumption that I must either know Socrates, in the sense of clearly perceiving him or having the thought of him clearly before my mind, or else my mind must be a complete blank concerning him.

It may be noted that ideas or notions (*ἔννοιαι*) are spoken of as

stamped on the memory, as well as perceptions. An idea is something we 'conceive in our own minds' (*αὐτοὶ ἐννοήσωμεν*), but do not perceive. Its nature and origin are left obscure; but the mention of such objects prepares the way for our knowledge of numbers, which are not perceived but are treated as images stamped in the memory (195E).

191E. SOCR. Now take a man who knows things in this way, and is attending to something that he sees or hears. Is there not here a possibility of his making a false judgment?
THEAET. How?
SOCR. By thinking that things he knows are other things he knows, or sometimes things he does not know. We were wrong when we agreed earlier that this was impossible.
THEAET. What do you think about it now?

Socrates' next speech (192A, 1–C, 5) contains a list of all the cases in which it is impossible to mistake one thing for another. He takes all the possible combinations of two objects which are (*a*) known (and now remembered) or (*b*) unknown (completely), (*c*) now perceived or (*d*) not now perceived. The conclusion is that there are only three combinations in which mistaking is possible. The reader would find the same difficulty as Theaetetus in following the statement and may prefer a summary to a translation. It will be simplest to use 'an acquaintance' to mean a person (or thing) whom I know and of whom I have a memory image now before my mind; and 'a stranger' to mean a person (or thing) with which I have never been acquainted at all, a *total* stranger.

Mistake, then, is impossible in the following cases:

(1) If neither object is now perceived, I cannot mistake an acquaintance for another acquaintance, or confuse him with a stranger, or confuse two strangers. (These cases will be illustrated by examples at 193A–B.)

(2) If perception only is involved, I cannot confuse two things which I see, or an object seen with an object not seen, or two objects neither of which is seen.

(3) Where both knowledge and perception are involved, I cannot confuse two acquaintances both now seen and recognised[1]; or confuse an acquaintance now seen and recognised with an absent acquaintance or with a stranger who is present. And there can be no confusion of two total strangers, whether I now see one of them or not.

[1] To recognise is to fit the new perception to the right memory-image, left by a former perception of the same object.

Socrates now gives a summary statement of the three cases where mistake is possible, and these are illustrated in detail.

192C, 5. SOCR. (*continues*). There remain, then, the following cases in which, if anywhere, false judgment can occur.
THEAET. What are they? Perhaps they may help me to understand better. At present I cannot follow.
SOCR. Take things you know: you can suppose them to be other things which you both know and perceive; or to be things you do not know, but do perceive; or you can confuse
D. two things which you both know and perceive.
THEAET. Now I am more in the dark than ever.
SOCR. Let me start again, then, and put it in this way. I know Theodorus and have a memory in my mind of what he is like, and the same with Theaetetus. At certain moments I see or touch or hear or otherwise perceive them; at other times, though I have no perception of you and Theodorus, I nevertheless remember you both and have you before my mind. Isn't that so?
E. THEAET. Certainly.
SOCR. That, then, is the first point I want to make clear—that it is possible either to perceive or not to perceive something one is acquainted with.
THEAET. True.
SOCR. And it is also possible, when one is not acquainted with a thing, sometimes not to perceive it either, sometimes merely to perceive it and nothing more.
THEAET. That is possible too.

Socrates now takes, for illustration, three cases from his list, where mistake is impossible. They are cases in which no present perception is involved. (1) When nothing is before my mind except images of things I have formerly become acquainted with, I cannot judge that one of these remembered things is the other. (2) If I have an image of one only, I cannot judge that the thing is something I have never known. (3) Still less can I identify or confuse two things, neither of which I have ever known.

192E. SOCR. Then see if you can follow me better now. If
193. Socrates knows Theodorus and Theaetetus, but sees neither and has no sort of present perception of them, he can never think in his own mind that Theaetetus is Theodorus. Is that good sense?
THEAET. Yes, that is true.
SOCR. Well, that was the first of the cases I mentioned.

193. THEAET. Yes.
SOCR. And the second was this: if I know one of you but not the other and perceive neither, once more I could never think that the one I know is the other whom I do not know.
THEAET. True.
B. SOCR. And thirdly, if I neither know nor perceive either of you, I cannot think that one unknown person is another unknown person. And now take it as if I had gone over the whole list of cases again, in which I shall never judge falsely about you and Theodorus, whether I know both or neither or only one of you. And the same applies to perceiving, if you follow me.
THEAET. I follow now.

'The same applies to perceiving' refers to the second class of cases, where perception only is involved. If there is nothing but two objects of perception, you cannot mistake the one for the other, whether you perceive both or neither or one only. There remains the third class of cases, where both previous acquaintance and present perception are concerned. Among these Socrates now illustrates the three cases in which mistake is possible.

193B. SOCR. It remains, then, that false judgment should occur in a case like this: when I, who know you and Theodorus
C. and possess imprints of you both like seal-impressions in the waxen block, see you both at a distance indistinctly and am in a hurry to assign the proper imprint of each to the proper visual perception, like fitting a foot into its own footmark to effect a recognition[1]; and then make the mistake of interchanging them, like a man who thrusts his feet into the wrong shoes, and apply the perception of each to the imprint of the other. Or my mistake might be illustrated by the sort of thing that happens in a mirror
D. when the visual current transposes right to left.[2] In that case mistaking or false judgment does result.
THEAET. I think it does, Socrates. That is an admirable description of what happens to judgment.
SOCR. Then there is also the case where I know both and perceive only one, and do not get the knowledge I

[1] An allusion to the recognition of Orestes by his footmark tallying with his sister Electra's, Aeschylus, *Choephori*, 205 ff.

[2] Plato explains reflection by supposing that a stream of light (the visual current) from the eye coalesces at the surface of the mirror with a stream of light (colour) from the object. How the transposition occurs will be explained below, p. 327.

193D. have of that one to correspond with my perception. That is the expression I used before, which you did not understand.

THEAET. No, I did not.

The first of these two cases might be called the mistake of double transposition. The second is really similar, but simpler, involving only a single transposition of the same type. Instead of two false judgments: 'Yonder man (Theodorus) is Theaetetus, and that other man (Theaetetus) is Theodorus', we now have only one. There is also the third case (192C) where I mistake a stranger whom I see for someone I remember. This is of the same pattern: I wrongly identify something now perceived (whether formerly known or not known, does not matter) with something I know. Socrates does not illustrate this, but now repeats his explanation of the two cases he has illustrated.

193D. SOCR. Well, that is what I was saying: if you know
E. one of two people and also perceive him and if you get the knowledge you have to correspond with the perception of him, you will never think he is another person whom you both know and perceive, if your knowledge of him likewise is got to correspond with the perception. That was so, wasn't it?

THEAET. Yes.

SOCR. But there was left over the case I have been describing now, in which we say false judgment does occur: the possibility that you may know both and see or otherwise
194. perceive both, but not get the two imprints to correspond each with its proper perception. Like a bad archer, you may shoot to one side and miss the mark—which is indeed another phrase we use for error.

THEAET. With good reason.

SOCR. Also, when a perception is present which belongs to one of the imprints, but none which belongs to the other, and the mind fits to the present perception the imprint belonging to the absent one, in all such cases it is in error. To sum up: in the case of objects one does not
B. know and has never perceived, there is, it seems, no possibility of error or false judgment, if our present account is sound; but it is precisely in the field of objects both known and perceived that judgment turns and twists about and proves false or true—true when it brings impressions straight to their proper imprints; false when it misdirects them crosswise to the wrong imprint.

194B. THEAET. Surely that is a satisfactory account, isn't it, Socrates?

C. SOCR. You will think still better of it when you hear the rest. To judge truly is a fine thing and there is something discreditable in error.

THEAET. Of course.

SOCR. Well, they say the differences arise in this way. When a man has in his mind a good thick slab of wax, smooth and kneaded to the right consistency, and the impressions that come through the senses are stamped on these tables of the 'heart'—Homer's word hints at the

D. mind's likeness to wax[1]—then the imprints are clear and deep enough to last a long time. Such people are quick to learn and also have good memories, and besides they do not interchange the imprints of their perceptions but think truly. These imprints being distinct and well-spaced are quickly assigned to their several stamps—the 'real things' as they are called—and such men are said to be clever. Do you agree?

THEAET. Most emphatically.

E. SOCR. When a person has what the poet's wisdom commends as a 'shaggy heart', or when the block is muddy or made of impure wax, or over soft or hard, the people with soft wax are quick to learn, but forgetful, those with hard wax the reverse. Where it is shaggy or rough, a gritty kind of stuff containing a lot of earth or dirt, the impressions obtained are indistinct; so are they too when the stuff is hard, for they have no depth. Impressions in

195. soft wax also are indistinct, because they melt together and soon become blurred. And if, besides this, they overlap through being crowded together into some wretched little narrow mind, they are still more indistinct. All these types, then, are likely to judge falsely. When they see or hear or think of something, they cannot quickly assign things to their several imprints. Because they are so slow and sort things into the wrong places, they constantly see and hear and think amiss, and we say they are mistaken about things and stupid.

[1] The Homeric word for heart (κέαρ) resembles κηρός (wax). Beare (*Gk. Theories of Elem. Cognition* 267) remarks that, had Plato chosen any physical organ to correspond to the wax as the seat of memory, it would probably have been the heart, the brain being the instrument of reason. There is no satisfactory evidence that the comparison of memory to a waxen block had ever been used before, except as a poet's metaphor (Aesch. *P.V.* 815 μνήμοσιν δέλτοις φρενῶν, *Eum.* 275, etc.).

195B. THEAET. Your description could not be better, Socrates.
SOCR. We are to conclude, then, that false judgments do exist in us?
THEAET. Most certainly.
SOCR. And true ones also, I suppose?
THEAET. True ones also.
SOCR. At last, then, we believe we have reached a satisfactory agreement that both these kinds of judgments certainly exist?
THEAET. Most emphatically.

It does not appear that Plato offers his waxen block as anything more than an illustration, a mechanical model which helps us to distinguish a memory-image from a fresh impression of sense, and to imagine the process of fitting the one to the other correctly or incorrectly. The conclusion, that true and false judgments of this type do exist, rests simply on familiar experience. The illustration serves to bring out the point that error comes in, not in the act of direct perception, but in judgments we make about what we perceive. This is an advance on Protagoras, who drew no distinction between what 'appears' to me to be true (what I believe or think) and what 'appears' to me as real in perception. But his account of false judgment as 'thinking the thing that is not' and his denial that such a thing is possible have been shelved. This thesis is reserved for the *Sophist*.

195B–196C. *False judgment in general cannot, however, be defined as the misfitting of perception to thought*

The weak point, however, is this. Only a small class of false judgments, even about things we now perceive, consist in identifying them with things we formerly perceived and now remember. This is the only type of judgment so far considered and described. It has been agreed, as a matter of common experience, that such judgments do exist. But there is an immense class of judgments, true and false, about things I do not now perceive and never have perceived. All historical judgments about events outside my own experience belong to this class. There are also, as Socrates now observes, true and false judgments about things that never can be perceived. Hence all that has been established is that false judgment does exist in a very small class of cases where we wrongly identify something we perceive. This is important, as contradicting Protagoras' doctrine that false judgment is impossible. But it has now to be pointed out that this 'mistaking' or wrong 'fitting together of thought and perception' is not a definition of false judgment in general. It will not cover cases where no perception

is involved. We can make mistakes about numbers, which are not objects of perception but are said to be 'known' in the sense we have just given to that term, *i.e.* registered as imprints in the memory. We must accordingly retract the earlier statement that mistakes cannot occur between two objects both known but not perceived.

195B. SOCR. It really does seem to be true, Theaetetus, that a garrulous person is a strange and disagreeable creature.[1]

THEAET. Why, what makes you say that?

C. SOCR. Disgust at my own stupidity. I am indeed garrulous: what else can you call a man who goes on bandying arguments to and fro because he is such a dolt that he cannot make up his mind and is loath to surrender any one of them?

THEAET. But why are you disgusted with yourself?

SOCR. I am not merely disgusted but anxious about the answer I shall make if someone asks: 'So, Socrates, you have made a discovery: that false judgment resides, not in our perceptions among themselves nor yet in our thoughts,

D. but in the fitting together of perception and thought?' I suppose I shall say, Yes, and plume myself on this brilliant discovery of ours.

THEAET. I don't see anything to be ashamed of in what you have just pointed out, Socrates.

SOCR. 'On the other hand,' he will continue, 'you also say that we can never imagine that a man whom we merely think of and do not see is a horse which again we do not see or touch but merely think of without perceiving it in any way?' I suppose I shall say, Yes, to that.

THEAET. And rightly.

E. SOCR. 'On that showing,' he will say, 'a man could never imagine that 11, which he merely thinks of, is 12, which again he merely thinks of.' Come, you must find the answer now.

THEAET. Well, I shall answer that, if he saw or handled eleven things, he might suppose they were twelve; but he will never make that judgment about the 11 and the 12 he has in his thoughts.

SOCR. Well now, does a man ever consider in his own

196. mind 5 and 7—I don't mean five men and seven men or anything of that sort, but just 5 and 7 themselves, which

[1] 'Garrulity' or 'babbling' was an abusive term applied to the conversations of Socrates and his associates. See below, p. 176, on *Soph.* 225D.

196. we describe as records in that waxen block of ours, among which there can be no false judgment—does anyone ever take these into consideration and ask himself in his inward conversation how much they amount to; and does one man believe and state that they make 11, another that they make 12, or does everybody agree they make 12?

B. THEAET. Far from it; many people say 11; and if larger numbers are involved, the more room there is for mistakes; for you are speaking generally of any numbers, I suppose.

SOCR. Yes, that is right. Now consider what happens in this case. Is it not thinking that the 12 itself that is stamped on the waxen block is 11?

THEAET. It seems so.

SOCR. Then haven't we come round again to our first argument? For when this happens to someone, he is thinking that one thing he knows is another thing he knows; and that, we said, was impossible. That was the very ground on which we were led to make out that there could be no such thing as false judgment: it was in order

C. to avoid the conclusion that the same man must at the same time know and not know the same thing.

THEAET. Quite true.

SOCR. If so, we must account for false judgment in some other way than as the misfitting of thought to perception. If it were that, we should never make mistakes among our thoughts themselves. As the case stands now, either there is no such thing as false judgment, or it is possible not to know what one does know. Which alternative do you choose?

THEAET. I see no possible choice, Socrates.

The Platonist may here be surprised to find our knowledge of a number regarded as the record in the memory-tablet of an impression, as if we became acquainted with the number 12 in the same way as with a colour or a sound or a person. Has Plato abandoned his doctrine of Recollection, according to which our knowledge of Forms, including numbers and their relations, is always latent in the soul, not acquired through the senses during this life, but only revived on the occasion of sense-experience? There is no ground for such a conclusion. The whole dialogue examines the claim of the world of external sensible objects to be the sole source of knowledge. This claim is taken as implying that outside us there are physical objects which can yield us sense-data through the several organs, and inside us a *tabula rasa* on

which impressions so received can be stamped and recorded. This mechanism is based on the empiricist assumption that all our knowledge must be derived somehow from the external objects of perception. On this assumption (which Plato himself does not accept) our idea of the number 12 must be supposed to be extracted from a series of sense-impressions and added to our memory records. As Campbell remarks, 'memory is made to do the work of abstraction'. This is all the apparatus that has so far come into view. It has sufficed to illustrate one class of mistakes—the wrong fitting-together of old records and new impressions. But we have now seen that this formula will not cover the mistaking of one memory record for another, and so it will not do as a general account of false judgment. We cannot admit mistakes about numbers, unless we can find a sense in which we can not know something we do know. The empiricist's apparatus will have to be enlarged.

196D–199C. *Memory compared to an aviary, to provide for mistaken judgments not involving perception*

Objection might be taken to the statement (196B) that, when we make the mistake, we 'think that the 12 on our wax-tablet is 11', or that 'one thing we know (12) is another thing we know (11)'. It is still presumed that a false judgment must consist in wrongly identifying one thing with another. Even if that were so, what we identify with 11 is, not 12, but 'the sum of 5 and 7' —a number which at the moment we do not know (in a sense). We are wondering what number it is, and wrongly conclude that it is 11. The number 12, although we are familiar with it, is not present to our mind. We do not judge that 12 is 11.

This objection, it is true, does not invalidate the only conclusion stated: that the misfitting of thought and perception cannot be a definition of false judgment in general. But it serves to bring out the need for some enlargement of the empiricist apparatus—some further distinction between the meanings of the word 'know'. The misleading statement that 'we judge the 12 in our waxen block to be 11' is a consequence of the too narrow use of 'know' in terms of that image. To 'know' meant to have become acquainted with a thing and to 'remember' it in the sense of having the memory of it now before the mind. If I remember both 11 and 12 in that way, to confuse them is as impossible as we said it was to confuse two absent friends when I now remember them both. Socrates, accordingly, goes on to distinguish yet another sense of 'know'. The image of an object may be registered in the memory without being present to our consciousness. It is possible not to know (have before our minds) what we do know

(possess somewhere registered in memory). A new simile, the aviary, is now substituted for the waxen block to provide for this latent knowledge. We shall no longer need to speak as if the number 12 were present to our minds and confused with 11.

196D. SOCR. But the argument is not going to allow both alternatives. However, we must stick at nothing: suppose we try being quite shameless.

THEAET. In what way?

SOCR. By making up our minds to describe what knowing is like.

THEAET. How is that shameless?

SOCR. You seem to be unaware that our whole conversation from the outset has been an inquiry after the nature of knowledge on the supposition that we did not know what it was.

THEAET. No, I am quite aware of that.

SOCR. Then, doesn't it strike you as shameless to explain what knowing is like, when we don't know what knowledge
E. is? The truth is, Theaetetus, that for some time past there has been a vicious taint in our discussion. Times out of number we have said: 'we know', 'we do not know', 'we have knowledge', 'we have no knowledge', as if we could understand each other while we still know nothing about knowledge. At this very moment, if you please, we have once more used the words 'know nothing' and 'understand', as if we had a right to use them while we are still destitute of knowledge.

THEAET. Well, but how are you going to carry on a discussion, Socrates, if you keep clear of those words?

197. SOCR. I cannot, being the man I am, though I might if I were an expert in debate. If such a person were here now, he would profess to keep clear of them and rebuke us severely for my use of language. As we are such bunglers, then, shall I be so bold as to describe what knowing is like? I think it might help us.

THEAET. Do so, then, by all means. And if you cannot avoid those words, you shall not be blamed.

SOCR. Well, you have heard what 'knowing' is commonly said to be?

THEAET. Possibly; but I don't remember at the moment.

B. SOCR. They say it is 'having knowledge'.[1]

[1] This is of course not a 'definition' of knowing, but a verbal paraphrase, which occurs at *Euthyd.* 277B. It may be due to Prodicus or some other writer on the correct use of language (*περὶ ὀνομάτων ὀρθότητος*). Prodicus is cited in the context at *Euthyd.* 277E.

197B. THEAET. True.

SOCR. Let us make a slight amendment and say: 'possessing knowledge'.

THEAET. What difference would you say that makes?

SOCR. None, perhaps; but let me tell you my idea and you shall help me test it.

THEAET. I will if I can.

SOCR. 'Having' seems to me different from 'possessing'. If a man has bought a coat and owns it, but is not wearing it, we should say he possesses it without having it about him.[1]

THEAET. True.

C. SOCR. Now consider whether knowledge is a thing you can possess in that way without having it about you, like a man who has caught some wild birds—pigeons or what not—and keeps them in an aviary he has made for them at home. In a sense, of course, we might say he 'has' them all the time inasmuch as he possesses them, mightn't we?

THEAET. Yes.

SOCR. But in another sense he 'has' none of them, though he has got control of them, now that he has made them captive in an enclosure of his own; he can take and have hold of them whenever he likes by catching any bird he

D. chooses, and let them go again; and it is open to him to do that as often as he pleases.

THEAET. That is so.

SOCR. Once more then, just as a while ago we imagined a sort of waxen block in our minds, so now let us suppose that every mind contains a kind of aviary stocked with birds of every sort, some in flocks apart from the rest, some in small groups, and some solitary, flying in any direction among them all.[2]

E. THEAET. Be it so. What follows?

SOCR. When we are babies we must suppose this receptacle empty, and take the birds to stand for pieces of knowledge. Whenever a person acquires any piece of

[1] Ἔχειν is commonly used of 'wearing' a garment. It also means 'to have hold of'—the phrase used below for holding the bird that has been caught inside the aviary.

[2] Some classification of the objects of knowledge seems to be hinted at. Comparison with the *Sophist* (252E ff.) may suggest that the large and small groups of birds are generic and specific Forms, the solitary birds which fly among all the rest, Forms of universal application like Existence, Sameness, Difference. But nothing turns on such conjectures.

197E. knowledge and shuts it up in his enclosure, we must say he has learnt or discovered the thing of which this is the knowledge, and that is what 'knowing' means.

THEAET. Be it so.

198. SOCR. Now think of him hunting once more for any piece of knowledge that he wants, catching and holding it, and letting it go again. In what terms are we to describe that —the same that we used of the original process of acquisition, or different ones? An illustration may help you to see what I mean. There is a science you call 'arithmetic'.

THEAET. Yes.

SOCR. Conceive that, then, as a chase after pieces of knowledge about all the numbers, odd or even.

THEAET. I will.

SOCR. That, I take it, is the science in virtue of which

B. a man has in his control pieces of knowledge about numbers and can hand them over to someone else.

THEAET. Yes.

SOCR. And when he hands them over, we call it 'teaching', and when the other takes them from him, that is 'learning', and when he has them in the sense of possessing them in that aviary of his, that is 'knowing'.

THEAET. Certainly.

SOCR. Now observe what follows. The finished arithmetician knows all numbers, doesn't he? There is no number the knowledge of which is not in his mind.

THEAET. Naturally.

C. SOCR. And such a person may sometimes count either the numbers themselves in his own head or some set of external things that have a number.

THEAET. Of course.

SOCR. And by counting we shall mean simply trying to find out what some particular number amounts to?

THEAET. Yes.

SOCR. It appears, then, that the man who, as we admitted, knows every number, is trying to find out what he knows as if he had no knowledge of it. No doubt you sometimes hear puzzles of that sort debated.

THEAET. Indeed I do.

D. SOCR. Well, our illustration from hunting pigeons and getting possession of them will enable us to explain that the hunting occurs in two ways: first, before you possess your pigeon in order to have possession of it; secondly, after getting possession of it, in order to catch and hold

198D. in your hand what you have already possessed for some time. In the same way, if you have long possessed pieces of knowledge about things you have learnt and know, it is still possible to get to know the same things again, by the process of recovering the knowledge of some particular thing and getting hold of it. It is knowledge you have possessed for some time, but you had not got it handy in your mind.

THEAET. True.

E. SOCR. That, then, was the drift of my question, what terms should be used to describe the arithmetician who sets about counting or the literate person who sets about reading; because it seemed as if, in such a case, the man was setting about learning again from himself what he already knew.

THEAET. That sounds odd, Socrates.

SOCR. Well, but can we say he is going to read or count
199. something he does *not* know, when we have already granted that he knows all the letters or all the numbers?

THEAET. No, that is absurd too.

SOCR. Shall we say, then, that we care nothing about words, if it amuses anyone to turn and twist the expressions 'knowing' and 'learning'? Having drawn a distinction between possessing knowledge and having it about one, we agree that it is impossible not to possess what one does possess, and so we avoid the result that a man should not know what he does know; but we say that it is possible for him to get hold of a false judgment about it. For
B. he may not have about him the knowledge of that thing, but a different piece of knowledge instead, if it so happens that, in hunting for some particular piece of knowledge, among those that are fluttering about, he misses it and catches hold of a different one. In that case, you see, he mistakes 11 for 12,[1] because he has caught hold of the knowledge of 11 that is inside him, instead of his knowledge of 12, as he might catch a dove in place of a pigeon.

THEAET. That seems reasonable.

SOCR. Whereas, when he catches the piece of knowledge he is trying to catch, he is not mistaken but thinks what

[1] Literally 'thinks 11 is 12'. This cannot now mean that he has both numbers before his mind and judges one of them to be the other. This was agreed to be impossible (195E). It means that he *mistakes* the number 11, which he lays hold of for the number 12 which he was really looking for, when he asked: What is the sum of 7 and 5?

199B. is true. In this way both true and false judgments can
C. exist, and the obstacles that were troubling us are removed. You will agree to this, perhaps? Or will you not?

THEAET. I will.

SOCR. Yes; for now we are rid of the contradiction about people not knowing what they do know. That no longer implies our not possessing what we do possess, whether we are mistaken about something or not.

The aviary has enlarged the machinery of the waxen block by providing for the process of hunting out latent pieces of knowledge and bringing them before the mind. So it has led to the suggestion that false judgment occurs when we get hold of the wrong piece of knowledge and 'interchange' it for the right one. An important difference between the two images is that the process of originally acquiring knowledge is differently conceived. The waxen block was thought of as a receptacle for sense-impressions which left their imprint as memory-images. It seemed hard to imagine how one such imprint should ever be mistaken for another; and no provision was made for historical knowledge or any knowledge not immediately derived from the senses. The aviary, on the other hand, represents knowledge as acquired from a teacher who 'hands over' pieces of information to the learner. Such information would not consist in a series of separate imprints, but rather of statements offered for our belief. It would cover historical and abstract knowledge, as well as our notions of such things as numbers.

Now, from the *Meno* onwards, Plato has repeatedly declared that what he calls 'knowledge' is not a thing that can be 'handed over' by one person to another. The true objects of knowledge must be directly seen by the eye of the soul; the professors of education who claim to put into the mind knowledge that is not there are like one who should claim to put sight into blind eyes.[1] The sophists are condemned for offering to 'hand over' 'excellence' (*areté*) of various sorts to their hearers.[2] In Plato's view all mathematical knowledge and knowledge of the Forms cannot, in the ordinary sense, be 'taught'. It is always in the soul and needs to be 'recollected'. The intervention of a teacher is not necessary, though the process may be directed and assisted by conversation ('dialectic') with a wiser person who will act as midwife. The Platonist will see at once that what is here called a 'piece of knowledge' can be nothing more than a belief (*δόξα*), conveyed from one mind to another. All this cannot be openly said here, because the Forms are excluded from the discussion,

[1] *Rep.* 518C. [2] *Meno* 93B; *Euthyd.* 273D, 287A.

which is confined to the empiricist claim that all knowledge comes from the external world of sense, either directly or by teaching as commonly conceived. But Plato is careful to note that we are still working on the empiricist assumption that the aviary is empty at birth—a *tabula rasa*—and gradually filled with contents derived from sensible experience and learning. The reader, guided by the long description of Socratic midwifery, is left to infer that these so-called 'pieces of knowledge' are not knowledge at all. It is perhaps with intention that Plato, while describing the recovery of latent 'knowledge', never uses his own word for recollection (*anamnesis*).

199C–200D. *Rejection of 'interchange of pieces of knowledge' as an account of False Judgment*

The aviary has enabled us to imagine how a man who has learnt that the sum of 7 and 5 is 12, may sometimes ask himself what the sum of 7 and 5 is, and get hold of a wrong 'piece of knowledge', viz. the number 11, which he is also acquainted with. He mistakes this for the 'piece of knowledge' he wants, namely 12. This 'interchange' may seem to be an unobjectionable description of such a mistake. Socrates, however, at once raises an objection, which turns upon the unexplained term 'piece of knowledge'.

199C. SOCR. (*continues*). But it strikes me that a still stranger consequence is coming in sight.
THEAET. What is that?
SOCR. That the interchange of pieces of knowledge should ever result in a judgment that is false.
THEAET. How do you mean?

D. SOCR. In the first place, that a man should have knowledge of something and at the same time fail to recognise [1] that very thing, not for want of knowing it but by reason of his own knowledge; and next that he should judge that thing to be something else and *vice versa*—isn't that very unreasonable: that when a piece of knowledge presents itself, the mind should fail to recognise anything and know nothing? On this showing, the presence of ignorance might just as well make us know something, or the presence of blindness make us see—if knowledge can ever make us fail to know.

This objection is obscure, and the language ambiguous: ἀγνοεῖν can mean either 'to be ignorant of' or 'to fail to recognise' (the

[1] For ἀγνοεῖν, meaning 'fail to recognise', cf. 188B.

opposite of *γνῶναι*, 'to recognise'). The 'piece of knowledge that presents itself' must mean the number 11, which I have laid hold of instead of the number 12 which I was looking for and have not found. In what sense does the interchange involve that I should 'fail to recognise (*ἀγνοεῖν*) that very thing, not for want of knowing it (*ἀγνωμοσύνῃ*) but by reason of my own knowledge'? 'Fail to recognise that very thing' (the number 11) can only mean that I fail to recognise the fact that it is not the number I want; hence Socrates says I judge it to be 12, *i.e.* mistake it for 12. But 'not for want of knowing it' (*ἀγνωμοσύνῃ*) means 'not for want of *be ingacquainted with* it'. The situation is analogous to what was described earlier: I see an acquaintance and, failing to recognise him, mistake him for another acquaintance. But there perception was involved, and the mistake was explained as the fitting-together of the fresh impression and the wrong memory-image. Here no perception is involved. Socrates' point seems to be that the aviary contains nothing but 'pieces of knowledge'. I am acquainted with both the numbers, 11 and 12. One of them (11) is now before my mind. How can I mistake that number for the other which I am also acquainted with? If I have been taught and know the truth that $7 + 5 = 12$, how can I substitute 11 for 12 and believe that I have got hold of the right number? There is no question here of seeing something dimly at a distance; only 'pieces of knowledge' are involved.

To this we might reply that an analogous explanation by the misfitting of two pieces of knowledge could be given, if the unexplained term 'piece of knowledge' were taken in a sufficiently wide sense. The expression covers objects (such as numbers) that I am acquainted with, as well as truths that I have been taught. All these are in my aviary. Does it also include a complex object such as 'the sum of 7 and 5'? This ought to be included; it consists of terms I am acquainted with and it is before my mind when I ask: what is the sum of 7 and 5? It is this object that I identify with 11 when I make my false judgment. If it is a 'piece of knowledge' and contained in the aviary, then the false judgment can be explained as the wrong putting-together of two pieces of knowledge, as in the waxen block false judgment was the putting-together of a fresh impression and the wrong memory imprint. The result will be a false judgment entirely composed of 'pieces of knowledge' (terms I am acquainted with). It thus seems that the aviary apparatus is, after all, as adequate to explain false judgment where no perception is involved as the waxen block was to explain false judgment involving perception.

It is hard to resist the impression that Plato has overlooked this

explanation, because he does not recognise ' the sum of 7 and 5 ' as a ' piece of knowledge ', but persists in speaking as if we judged not that ' the sum of 7 and 5 is 11 ' but that ' 12 (the number we are seeking) is 11 (the number we lay hold of) '. If such objects as ' the sum of 7 and 5 ' are excluded, then the difficulty Socrates raises does exist: how can I mistake the 11 which I have before my mind for the 12 which I know but have not before my mind?

Theaetetus, at any rate, does not put forward the explanation above offered. He takes up Socrates' word for ' ignorance ' or ' failure to recognise ' (*ἀγνωμοσύνη*), and suggests that our minds may contain ' pieces of ignorance ' as well as ' pieces of knowledge '.

199e. THEAET. Perhaps, Socrates, we were wrong in making the birds stand for pieces of knowledge only, and we ought to have imagined pieces of ignorance flying about with them in the mind. Then, in chasing them, our man would lay hold sometimes of a piece of knowledge, sometimes of a piece of ignorance; and the ignorance would make him judge falsely, the knowledge truly, about the same thing.

What is a ' piece of ignorance '? Evidently not an object I am unacquainted with, for then it would not be in the aviary at all. It can only be a false belief which I have somehow formed or been taught, such as that $7 + 5 = 11$. There is no reason why false beliefs should not be in the aviary; in fact our aviaries contain only too many. In so far as they consist of terms I am acquainted with and are things that I have learnt and possess stored in my memory, they satisfy the description of ' pieces of knowledge '. But they are not knowledge in the sense in which whatever is knowledge must be true. That they are simply false beliefs is practically stated in Theaetetus' last words: ' the ignorance would make him judge falsely '. Theaetetus' suggestion means that what I lay hold of is an old false belief which I bring up into consciousness.

An obvious answer to Theaetetus' suggestion would be this: ' You explain my making a false judgment now as my getting hold of an old false belief which I have acquired and have in my memory; but that does not explain how I could acquire that false belief originally. You merely push back to an earlier stage the same problem: how could I ever judge that $7 + 5 = 11$? ' Socrates, however, does not raise that objection. Taking Theaetetus' suggestion that I call up and affirm an old false belief, he asks how it is that I fail to recognise it as false and mistake it for a true piece of knowledge.

199e. SOCR. It is not easy to disapprove of anything you say, Theaetetus; but think again about your suggestion. Sup-

199E. pose it is as you say; then the man who lays hold of the
200. piece of ignorance will judge falsely. Is that right?

THEAET. Yes.

SOCR. But of course he will not think he is judging falsely.

THEAET. Of course not.

SOCR. No; he will think he is judging truly; and his attitude of mind will be the same as if he knew the thing he is mistaken about.

THEAET. Naturally.

SOCR. So he will imagine that, as a result of his chase, he has got hold of a piece of knowledge, not a piece of ignorance.

THEAET. Clearly.

SOCR. Then we have gone a long way round only to find ourselves confronted once more with our original difficulty. Our destructive critic will laugh at us. 'You wonderful
B. people,' he will say, 'are we to understand that a man knows both a piece of knowledge and a piece of ignorance, and then supposes that one of these things he knows is the other which he also knows? Or does he know neither, and then judge that one of these unknown things is the other? Or does he know only one, and identify this known thing with the unknown one, or the unknown one with the known? Or are you going to tell me that there are yet further pieces of knowledge *about* your pieces of knowledge and ignorance, and that their owner keeps these shut up in yet another of
C. your ridiculous aviaries or waxen blocks, knowing them so long as he possesses them, although he may not have them at hand in his mind? On that showing you will find yourselves perpetually driven round in a circle and never getting any further.' What are we to reply to that, Theaetetus?

THEAET. Really, Socrates, I don't know what we are to say.

SOCR. Maybe, my young friend, we have deserved this rebuke, and the argument shows that we were wrong to
D. leave knowledge on one side and look first for an explanation of false judgment. That cannot be understood until we have a satisfactory account of the nature of knowledge.

THEAET. As things now stand, Socrates, one cannot avoid that conclusion.

The critic objects that it is as hard to explain how I can fail to recognise a false belief as false and mistake it for the true belief which I possess stored in my mind, as it is to explain how I can mistake an object before my mind for another object which is in my memory. As Socrates indicates, that leads on to the question:

How can I know that I know? How can I recognise knowledge when I have it and be sure that it is knowledge? This is an old problem inconclusively discussed in the *Charmides* (167 ff.). Plato refuses to pursue it here, or to carry any further the attempt to account for false belief.

What has emerged is that the term 'knowledge' is very ambiguous. Until we have discovered all its meanings, we cannot really explain false judgment. The discussion has been fruitful in bringing to light some of these meanings. But the scope of the dialogue excludes all that Plato calls knowledge in the full sense. He breaks off here because he cannot go further without invoking the true objects of knowledge. Plato's own analysis of false judgment will be given in the *Sophist*, when the Forms have been brought into view.

200D–201C. *Conclusion: Knowledge cannot be defined as True Belief*

It has become clear that the so-called 'pieces of knowledge' which I have learnt from a teacher and stored in my memory are nothing better than true beliefs. When I recall one to consciousness my attitude of mind towards it is, as Socrates says, indistinguishable from my attitude to a false belief. This consideration leads us to the next point: the final refutation of the claim of true belief to be knowledge. My confidence in a mere belief is not grounded in reason. The teaching which consists in 'handing over' beliefs, whether true or false, is no better than the rhetorical persuasion of a barrister. Knowledge is not so gained; and when it is gained, it cannot be shaken by persuasion.

200D. SOCR. To start all over again, then: what is one to say that knowledge is? For surely we are not going to give up yet.

THEAET. Not unless you do so.

SOCR. Then tell me: what definition can we give with the least risk of contradicting ourselves?

E. THEAET. The one we tried before, Socrates. I have nothing else to suggest.

SOCR. What was that?

THEAET. That true belief is knowledge. Surely there can at least be no mistake in believing what is true and the consequences are always satisfactory.[1]

[1] It has been pointed out in the *Meno* (97A) that for practical purposes it is as useful to believe that a road leads to a certain place as to know that it does. Cf. also *Rep.* 506C: belief without knowledge is at the best like a blind man who takes the right road.

200E. SOCR. Try, and you will see, Theaetetus, as the man said when he was asked if the river was too deep to ford. So here, if we go forward on our search, we may stumble upon
201. something that will reveal the thing we are looking for. We shall make nothing out, if we stay where we are.

THEAET. True; let us go forward and see.

SOCR. Well, we need not go far to see this much: you will find a whole profession to prove that true belief is not knowledge.

THEAET. How so? What profession?

SOCR. The profession of those paragons of intellect known as orators and lawyers. There you have men who use their skill to produce conviction, not by instruction, but by making people believe whatever they want them to believe. You
B. can hardly imagine teachers so clever as to be able, in the short time allowed by the clock, to instruct their hearers thoroughly in the true facts of a case of robbery or other violence which those hearers had not witnessed.

THEAET. No, I cannot imagine that; but they can convince them.

SOCR. And by convincing you mean making them believe something.

THEAET. Of course.

SOCR. And when a jury is rightly convinced of facts which can be known only by an eye-witness, then, judging by hear-
C. say and accepting a true belief, they are judging without knowledge, although, if they find the right verdict, their conviction is correct?

THEAET. Certainly.

SOCR. But if true belief and knowledge were the same thing, the best of jurymen could never have a correct belief without knowledge. It now appears that they must be different things.

This argument is repeated in a later dialogue, the *Timaeus* (51D), where the existence of the Forms is said to follow from the distinction between knowledge or rational understanding (*νοῦς*) and true belief. Knowledge is produced by instruction, always accompanied by a true account of its grounds (*ἀληθὴς λόγος*), unshakable by persuasion, and possessed by gods and only a few among men. True belief is produced by persuasion, not based on rational grounds (*ἄλογον*), can be changed by persuasion, and is possessed by all mankind.

In our passage Socrates has not spoken of the absence of rational

grounds, such as he has in mind in the *Meno* and the *Timaeus*. In both those dialogues Plato is thinking of what he himself calls knowledge. In the *Meno* mathematical knowledge is in question. After his experiment with the slave, Socrates remarks that the slave has now a true belief about the solution ; but it will not be knowledge until he has been taken repeatedly through all the steps of the proof. He will then see for himself, with unshakable conviction, that the conclusion must be true. His belief will now be assured by reflection on the grounds or reasons (*αἰτίας λογισμῷ*). Such is the ' true account of the grounds ' (*ἀληθὴς λόγος*) to which the *Timaeus* refers. But here the real objects of knowledge are not to be mentioned, and Socrates is only allowed his analogous contrast between the juryman's second-hand belief and the direct ' knowledge ' of the eye-witness, who has seen the fact for himself.

III. The claim of True Belief accompanied by an Account or Explanation to be Knowledge

201c–202c. *Socrates states this theory as he has heard it*

Theaetetus' next suggestion is that the addition of some kind of ' account ' or ' explanation ' (*logos*) [1] will convert true belief into knowledge. Various possible senses of ' account ' are distinguished and considered, and the suggestion is finally rejected. It will appear, however, that no one of these senses is the sense which ' account ' bears in the *Meno* and the *Timaeus*. Why that sense is ignored will become clear as we proceed.

201c. Theaet. Yes, Socrates, I have heard someone make the distinction.[2] I had forgotten, but now it comes back to me.

d. He said that true belief with the addition of an account (*logos*) was knowledge, while belief without an account was outside its range. Where no account could be given of a thing, it was not ' knowable '—that was the word he used —where it could, it was knowable.

Socr. A good suggestion. But tell me how he distinguished these knowable things from the unknowable. It may turn out that what you were told tallies with something I have heard said.

[1] English provides no single equivalent for *logos*, a word which covers (1) statement, speech ; (2) expression, definition, description, formula ; (3) ' tale ' or enumeration ; (4) explanation, account, ground. A translator is forced to use now one, now another of these expressions. In the text the word remains ambiguous until Socrates distinguishes some of its chief meanings.

[2] Between knowledge and true belief.

201D. THEAET. I am not sure if I can recall that; but I think I should recognise it if I heard it stated.

SOCR. If you have had a dream, let me tell you mine in return. I seem to have heard some people say that what
E. might be called the first elements [1] of which we and all other things consist are such that no account can be given of them. Each of them just by itself can only be named; we cannot attribute to it anything further or say that it exists or does
202. not exist; for we should at once be attaching to it existence or non-existence, whereas we ought to add nothing if we are to express just it alone. We ought not even to add 'just' or 'it' or 'each' or 'alone' or 'this' [2], or any other of a host of such terms. These terms, running loose about the place, are attached to everything, and they are distinct from the things to which they are applied. If it were possible for an element to be expressed in any formula exclusively belonging to it, no other terms ought to enter into that expression; but in fact there is no formula in which any
B. element can be expressed: it can only be named, for a name is all there is that belongs to it. But when we come to things composed of these elements, then, just as these things are complex, so the names are combined to make a description (*logos*), a description being precisely a combination of names. Accordingly, elements are inexplicable and unknowable, but they can be perceived; while complexes ('syllables') are knowable and explicable, and you can have a true notion of them. So when a man gets hold of the true notion of
C. something without an account, his mind does think truly of it, but he does not know it; for if one cannot give and receive an account of a thing, one has no knowledge of that thing. But when he has also got hold of an account, all this becomes possible to him and he is fully equipped with knowledge.

Does that version represent the dream as you heard it, or not?

THEAET. Perfectly.

The theory here put forward was certainly never held by Plato himself. On the other hand, it is obviously a philosophic theory,

[1] *στοιχεῖα* meant letters of the alphabet, or the 'rudiments' of a subject. This is said to be its first occurrence as applied to the elements of physical things. Presently *συλλαβαί* (syllables) is used for the complex things composed of elements.

[2] Buttmann's conjecture *τὸ* '*τὸ*' for *τοῦτο* (here and at 205C) may be supported by *Soph.* 239A. See note there (p. 207).

which would not occur to common sense. It must belong to some contemporary of Socrates or Plato, whom Plato does not choose to name.[1] Possibly, Socrates is represented as 'dreaming' it because the theory was really advanced after his death. There seems to be no evidence sufficient to identify the author.[2]

The theory may be considered under the three heads: (*a*) Things; (*b*) Language; (*c*) Cognition.

(*a*) *Things.*—The only things recognised are 'ourselves and everything else', *i.e.* concrete individual natural objects. These are composed of simple unanalysable elements. There is no question of immaterial things, for the elements are said to be perceptible. This also shows that atoms are not intended. Since no examples are given, we cannot say whether 'elements' means simple primary substances, such as gold, or simple qualities, like yellow, or even whether the author drew this distinction. He may have meant any simple constituent that we should name in enumerating all the parts we can perceive and distinguish in a complex thing.

(*b*) *Language.*—The element, being simple, has a name only. We can refer to or indicate it by this name. But it 'has no *logos*'. This appears to cover two meanings which we should distinguish. (1) We cannot make any *statement* about the element, such as that it exists. If we are to speak of it alone, we must not add, or ascribe, to it any second 'name' (word). The element is completely indicated by uttering the single word 'gold' or 'yellow'. We may not even say 'this is yellow', since 'this' and 'is' express something different from the simple name 'yellow', which already expresses all there is to be expressed and all that I perceive. Also, 'this' and 'is' do not belong exclusively to the element I now perceive. (2) The name of an element is *indefinable*, just as the element itself is unanalysable. The nature is simple and no 'account' consisting of several names (words) can be given of it.

The definition of *logos* as a 'combination of names (words)' will cover statements about a thing as well as the definition of a definable name. But probably the author was not thinking about defining names (which he would not rank among complex 'things') but only about describing things. The simple name indicates the elementary

[1] Theaetetus (at 201c) and Socrates (202E, τὸν εἰπόντα) both speak of the author in the singular.

[2] The case for Antisthenes was most fully stated by Gillespie (*Arch. Gesch. Philos.* xxvi, 479 ff.; xxvii, 17 ff.). See also Ross, *Metaph. of Aristotle* i, 346. A. Levi (*Revue Hist. Philos.* 1930, pp. 16 ff.), among others, has disputed this attribution. Prof. G. C. Field has given a judicious account of Antisthenes in *Plato and His Contemporaries* (1930), 160 ff. I can see little resemblance between the doctrine and the atomism attributed to Ecphantus, who is suggested by Burnet and Prof. Taylor.

part; the full description or 'account' of a complex thing consists of as many names as there are elements. All statements about the thing he would regard as giving it names, each of which should belong to one of its parts. In the *Sophist* (p. 253) we shall meet again with this view of what was later called 'predication'. The effect is that the distinction between the definition and other statements about the thing is not drawn; and this appears to be the case in our passage.

(*c*) *Cognition.*—The theory distinguishes between perception (αἴσθησις), a true notion (ἀληθὴς δόξα), and knowledge (ἐπιστήμη).

Of the element we have only a simple direct perception, not 'knowledge'. Of the complex thing we have at first a true notion (ἀληθὴς δόξα) without a *logos*. *Logos*, as the later argument shows, means enumerating by name the simple components of the complex. When I have done this, I have 'given an account' of the complex thing and am now said to 'know' it. I have expressed what the thing is by giving a list of all its simple parts. But it is hard to be sure what is meant by the 'true δόξα' which I have before I enumerate the parts. Presumably it means a complex unanalysed presentation of the whole object. In defence of the translation 'true notion' it may be remarked that Plato uses the phrase 'get hold of the true δόξα *of a thing* without a *logos*'.[1] 'Notion' or 'impression' seems to be meant. It may be conjectured that such a notion would be expressed by a definable name, such as 'man', or (to use Socrates' later illustration, 207A) 'wagon'. Possibly δόξα includes the judgment 'That is a man'. This judgment may be true (perhaps, *must* be true); but I shall not have knowledge till I have enumerated all the parts of the object, which is the same thing as defining the name.

The theory mentions only *true* notions, not false ones. It is not unlikely that the author held that every notion is true. If the notion is composed of simple perceptions, each of which is an impression directly given by some simple property of the thing, and if there can be no error in the perceptions, there can be none in the complex notion. The theory may hold that there must be just that thing I perceive or have a notion of; otherwise I should be perceiving something else or nothing at all. It is quite possible that the author of the theory agreed (as Antisthenes did) with those who denied the possibility of false beliefs and statements.

[1] 202B: ὅταν ἄνευ λόγου τὴν ἀληθῆ δόξαν τινός τις λάβῃ. We have already noted (p. 119) Plato's use of δοξάζειν with an accusative for 'thinking *of* a thing'. Again ἔχων δόξαν περὶ σοῦ (209A, 1) and σὲ ἐδόξαζον (209B, 2) are used interchangeably for 'having a notion of you'.

202c–206c. *The Theory criticised for making Elements unknowable*

For the understanding of the following argument, it is essential to grasp that the theory is materialistic, in the sense that the only 'things' it recognises as the objects of any sort of cognition are concrete individual things, and the perceptible parts of which such things are aggregates.

Socrates first disposes of the theory on its own ground, where the statement that elements are unknowable proves fatal.

202c. SOCR. So this dream finds favour and you hold that a true notion with the addition of an account is knowledge?
THEAET. Precisely.
d. SOCR. Can it be, Theaetetus, that, all in a moment, we have found out to-day what so many wise men have grown old in seeking and have not found?
THEAET. I, at any rate, am satisfied with our present statement, Socrates.
SOCR. Yes, the statement just in itself may well be satisfactory; for how can there ever be knowledge without an account and right belief? [1] But there is one point in the theory as stated that does not find favour with me.
THEAET. What is that?
SOCR. What might be considered its most ingenious
e. feature: it says that the elements are unknowable, but whatever is complex ('syllables') can be known.
THEAET. Is not that right?
SOCR. We must find out. We hold as a sort of hostage for the theory the illustration in terms of which it was stated.
THEAET. Namely?
SOCR. Letters—the elements of writing—and syllables. That and nothing else was the prototype the author of this theory had in mind, don't you think?
THEAET. Yes, it was.
203. SOCR. Let us take up that illustration, then, and put it to the question, or rather put the question to ourselves: did we learn our letters on that principle or not? [2] To begin with: is it true that an account can be given of syllables, but not of letters?
THEAET. It may be so.

[1] This may mean that the formula 'true belief with an account' is a satisfactory description at least of some knowledge, provided that the right meaning be given to *logos*, not any of the meanings discussed in the following context.

[2] Socrates goes back to this question at 206a.

203. SOCR. I agree, decidedly. Suppose you are asked about the first syllable of 'Socrates': 'Explain, Theaetetus; what is SO?' How will you answer?
THEAET. S and O.
SOCR. And you have there an account of the syllable?
THEAET. Yes.

B. SOCR. Go on, then; give me a similar account of S.
THEAET. But how can one state the elements of an element? The fact is, of course, Socrates, that S is one of the consonants, nothing but a noise, like a hissing of the tongue; while B not only has no articulate sound but is not even a noise, and the same is true of most of the letters. So they may well be said to be inexplicable, when the clearest of them, the seven vowels themselves, have only a sound, and no sort of account can be given of them.[1]
SOCR. So far, then, we have reached a right conclusion about knowledge.
THEAET. Apparently.

The 'right conclusion' is that, if *logos* means an account or explanation consisting in the enumeration of the components of a complex thing, we must finally reach simple parts which cannot be so 'explained'. (So in mathematics the ultimate terms used in definitions must be indefinable.) But if such analysis is to yield knowledge, these ultimate components must be knowable. The weak point of the theory is that it says they are unknowable, and can only be perceived. So the process of acquiring knowledge will be a process of analysing a complex which is not yet known into components which cannot be known.

The argument exposing this weakness is in the form of a dilemma. A syllable (complex) must be either (1) the mere aggregate of the letters, or (2) a single entity which comes into being when the letters are combined and vanishes when they are separated. Socrates easily disposes of the first alternative.

203C. SOCR. But now, have we been right in declaring that the letter cannot be known, though the syllable can?
THEAET. That seems all right.
SOCR. Take the syllable then: do we mean by that both the two letters or (if there are more than two) all the letters?

[1] At *Philebus* 18B we find the same classification: (1) *vowels* (*φωνήεντα*), (2) *consonants* (*ἄφωνα*, without articulate sound), (3) *mutes* (*ἄφθογγα*, which are not even noises).

203c. Or do we mean a single entity that comes into existence from the moment when they are put together?

THEAET. I should say we mean all the letters.

SOCR. Then take the case of the two letters S and O. The two together are the first syllable of my name. Anyone who knows that syllable knows both the letters, doesn't he?

D. THEAET. Naturally.

SOCR. So he knows the S and the O.

THEAET. Yes.

SOCR. But has he, then, no knowledge of *each* letter, so that he knows both without knowing either?

THEAET. That is a monstrous absurdity, Socrates.

SOCR. And yet, if it is necessary to know each of two things before one can know both, he simply must know the letters first, if he is ever to know the syllable; and so our fine theory will vanish and leave us in the lurch.

E. THEAET. With a startling suddenness.

SOCR. Yes, because we are not keeping a good watch upon it.

This argument is not verbal, but quite fair. If the syllable is exactly the same thing as its two letters, then to know the syllable is to know the letters. It may be added that the theory distinguished knowledge from perception, and evidently regarded knowledge as superior. Since the syllable is nothing more than the aggregate of the two letters, of each of which I have a perception, 'the addition of the account' which was to yield knowledge can in fact only lead to two perceptions, side by side, of two unknowable objects.

(2) The second alternative—that the syllable is something other than the aggregate of the letters—requires some more subtle distinctions.

203E. SOCR. (*continues*). Perhaps we ought to have assumed that the syllable was not the letters but a single entity that arises out of them with a unitary character of its own and different from the letters.

THEAET. By all means. Indeed, it may well be so rather than the other way.

SOCR. Let us consider that. We ought not to abandon an imposing theory in this poor-spirited manner.

THEAET. Certainly not.

204. SOCR. Suppose, then, it is as we say now: the syllable arises as a single entity from any set of letters which can

204. be combined [1]; and that holds of every complex, not only in the case of letters.
THEAET. By all means.
SOCR. In that case, it must have no parts.
THEAET. Why?
SOCR. Because, if a thing has parts, the whole thing must be the same as all the parts.

The term 'whole' is here limited to mean a thing composed of parts into which it can be divided up, in such a way that the parts so arrived at account for the whole thing. Thus the sum of money called a shilling can be divided into twelve pence which completely represent its value. Nothing evaporates in the process of division. So the whole here is said to be exactly equivalent to 'all the parts'. Accordingly, if the syllable or complex is something over and above the letters, the letters will not be parts of that something (and it can have no other parts); so it will not be the 'whole'. From this statement we might pass straight to the conclusion (205C): Since a syllable is a unitary thing, having no parts into which it can be analysed, it is simple, inexplicable, and unknowable for the same reason as the letter. This is the conclusion which completes the dilemma. It is fatal to the theory, if we keep to the theory's own assumptions. But here Socrates turns aside to meet the objection that a whole consisting of parts may not be simply the 'sum' of those parts (*τὸ πᾶν*) or 'all the parts' (*τὰ πάντα*), but a single entity arising out of them and distinct from them. It is true that even a jigsaw puzzle, when completed, has a unity as forming a picture, which disappears when the parts are separated. But Socrates is justified in arguing that that resulting entity is not properly described as 'the whole'. It is an additional element which supervenes on the putting together of the parts which make the whole. He urges that the whole cannot be distinguished from the 'sum', which itself cannot be distinguished from 'all the parts'.

204A. SOCR. (*continues*). Or do you say that a whole likewise [2] is a single entity that arises out of the parts and is different from the aggregate of the parts?
THEAET. Yes, I do.
SOCR. Then do you regard the sum (*τὸ πᾶν*) as the same thing as the whole, or are they different?

[1] *συναρμοττόντων* is not 'harmonious'. It means that only some letters will 'fit together' to form a syllable: one of them must always be a vowel (*Soph.* 253A). Other combinations of letters, *e.g.* two or three consonants without a vowel, are impossible.

[2] 'likewise' (*καὶ*), *i.e.* as well as the syllable, of which this has been said.

204B. THEAET. I am not at all clear; but you tell me to answer boldly, so I will take the risk of saying they are different.
SOCR. Your boldness, Theaetetus, is right; whether your answer is so, we shall have to consider.
THEAET. Yes, certainly.
SOCR. Well, then, the whole will be different from the sum, according to our present view.
THEAET. Yes.
SOCR. Well but now, is there any difference between the sum and all the things it includes? For instance, when we say, 'one, two, three, four, five, six', or 'twice three' or
C. 'three times two' or 'four and two' or 'three and two and one', are we in all these cases expressing the same thing or different things?
THEAET. The same.
SOCR. Just six, and nothing else?
THEAET. Yes.
SOCR. In fact, in each form of expression we have expressed all the six.[1]
THEAET. Yes.
SOCR. But when we express them all, is there no sum [2] that we express?
THEAET. There must be.
SOCR. And is that sum anything else than 'six'?
THEAET. No.
D. SOCR. Then, at any rate in the case of things that consist of a number, the words 'sum' and 'all the things' denote the same thing.
THEAET. So it seems.
SOCR. Let us put our argument, then, in this way. The number of (square feet in) an acre, and the acre are the same thing, aren't they?
THEAET. Yes.
SOCR. And so too with the number of (feet in) a mile?
THEAET. Yes.
SOCR. And again with the number of (soldiers in) an army and the army, and so on, in all cases. The total number is the same as the total thing in each case.
THEAET. Yes.
E. SOCR. But the number of (units in) any collection of things cannot be anything but *parts* of that collection?

[1] Reading *πάντα τὰ ἓξ* with BT.
[2] The word 'sum' (*πᾶν*) here is necessary to the argument. The manuscripts have *πάλιν*.

204E. THEAET. No.
SOCR. Now, anything that has parts consists of parts.
THEAET. Evidently.
SOCR. But all the parts, we have agreed, are the same as the sum, if the total number is to be the same as the total thing.
THEAET. Yes.
SOCR. The whole, then, does not consist of parts; for if it were all the parts it would be a sum.
THEAET. Apparently not.
SOCR. But can a part be a part of anything but its whole?
THEAET. Yes; of the sum.
205. SOCR. You make a gallant fight of it, Theaetetus. But does not 'the sum' mean precisely something from which nothing is missing?
THEAET. Necessarily.
SOCR. And is not a whole exactly the same thing—that from which nothing whatever is missing? Whereas, when something is removed, the thing becomes neither a whole nor a sum: it changes at the same moment from being both to being neither.
THEAET. I think now that there is no difference between a sum and a whole.

Plato is not denying that there are wholes which contain an additional element that arises when the parts are put together and disappears when they are separated. He was aware of this,[1] but his point is that such an additional element is not what we mean by 'the whole'. It may also be remarked that he is arguing within the limits of the theory he is criticising. That theory holds that the only things we can perceive or know or talk about are concrete individual things in nature, complex or simple, and that a complex thing is no more than an aggregate of simple things or elements, which can be enumerated in the only account we can give of it. When the enumeration is complete we know all that we can know about the thing. So the whole is nothing but the sum of its parts. A man is, for this theory, a trunk and a head and limbs. There is no substance or essence 'Man', over and above the separable 'material' parts, such as Plato and Aristotle would recognise and make the subject of a definition (*logos*) by genus and specific difference.

Having ruled out the suggestion that 'the whole' can be a single entity distinct from all the parts, Socrates can now return to the

[1] Cf. Aristotle's discussion, inspired by the *Theaetetus*, at *Metaph.* z, 17.

argument interrupted at 204A, namely the second alternative: that the syllable or complex is a unity over and above its letters or elements. He can now reaffirm the statement there made, that if the syllable is such a unity, it is not a whole and can have no parts.

205A. SOCR. Well, we were saying—were we not?—that when a thing has parts, the whole or sum will be the same thing as all the parts?

THEAET. Certainly.

SOCR. To go back, then, to the point I was trying to make
B. just now; if the syllable is not the same thing as the letters, does it not follow that it cannot have the letters as parts of itself; otherwise being the same thing as the letters, it would be neither more nor less knowable than they are?

THEAET. Yes.

SOCR. And it was to avoid that consequence that we supposed the syllable to be different from the letters.

THEAET. Yes.

SOCR. Well, if the letters are not parts of the syllable, can you name any things, other than its letters, that are parts of a syllable?

THEAET. Certainly not, Socrates. If I admitted that it had any parts, it would surely be absurd to set aside the letters and look for parts of any other kind.

C. SOCR. Then, on the present showing, a syllable will be a thing that is absolutely one and cannot be divided into parts of any sort?[1]

THEAET. Apparently.

SOCR. Do you remember then, my dear Theaetetus, our accepting a short while ago a statement that we thought satisfactory: that no account could be given of the primary things of which other things are composed, because each of them, taken just by itself, was incomposite; and that it was not correct to attribute even 'existence' to it, or to call it 'this', on the ground that these words expressed different things that were extraneous to it; and this was the ground for making the primary thing inexplicable and unknowable?

THEAET. I remember.

D. SOCR. Then is not exactly this, and nothing else, the ground of its being simple in nature and indivisible into parts? I can see no other.

[1] *παντάπασι*, put first for emphasis, should be construed with *μία τις ἰδέα ἀμέριστος*.

205D. THEAET. Evidently there is no other.
SOCR. Then has not the syllable now turned out to be a thing of the same sort, if it has no parts and is a unitary thing?
THEAET. Certainly.
SOCR. To conclude, then: if, on the one hand, the syllable is the same thing as a number of letters and is a whole with the letters as its parts, then the letters must be neither more nor less knowable and explicable than syllables, since we made out that all the parts are the same thing as the whole.
E. THEAET. True.
SOCR. But if, on the other hand, the syllable is a unity without parts, syllable and letter likewise are equally incapable of explanation and unknowable. The same reason will make them so.
THEAET. I see no way out of that.
SOCR. If so, we must not accept this statement: that the syllable can be known and explained, the letter cannot.
THEAET. No, not if we hold by our argument.

Putting aside the illustration from letters, it has now been established that knowledge cannot be gained, as the theory holds, by analysing a concrete thing, presented in a complex notion, into its simple parts, each presented in a simple perception which is not knowledge.

It is finally pointed out that the illustration itself tells against the theory. Our knowledge of letters must actually be clearer than our knowledge of syllables, whereas the theory evidently regards our perception of elements as inferior to the knowledge we are alleged to gain by giving an account of the complex.

206. SOCR: And again, would not your own experience in learning your letters rather incline you to accept the opposite view?
THEAET. What view do you mean?
SOCR. This: that all the time you were learning you were doing nothing else but trying to distinguish by sight or hearing each letter by itself, so as not to be confused by any arrangement of them in spoken or written words.
THEAET. That is quite true.
SOCR. And in the music school the height of accomplish-
B. ment lay precisely in being able to follow each several

206B. note and tell which string it belonged to; and notes, as everyone would agree, are the elements of music.[1]

THEAET. Precisely.

SOCR. Then, if we are to argue from our own experience of elements and complexes to other cases, we shall conclude that elements in general yield knowledge that is much clearer than knowledge of the complex and more effective for a complete grasp of anything we seek to know. If anyone tells us that the complex is by its nature knowable, while the element is unknowable, we shall suppose that, whether he intends it or not, he is playing with us.

THEAET. Certainly.

206C–E. *Three possible meanings of 'account'.* (1) *Expression of thought in speech* (*irrelevant*)

The refutation of the theory 'dreamt' by Socrates is now complete. It turns upon the allegation that the simple and unanalysable is unknowable. But Theaetetus' suggestion that knowledge is true judgment or belief combined with an account or explanation may have other meanings not involving this fatal flaw. Socrates accordingly turns to consider these possible meanings. The discussion still proceeds, however, on certain assumptions of the refuted theory, namely that the only things to be known are concrete individual things, and that knowledge accordingly must consist in giving some account of such things. This limitation is in accordance with the scope of the whole dialogue, which asks whether knowledge can be extracted from the world of concrete natural things, yielding perceptions and complex notions, without invoking other factors. The three meanings of *logos* now considered are determined by these assumptions, which exclude Plato's own view, that the objects of which knowledge must give an account are not concrete individuals but objects of thought, and that the simpler terms in which the account must be stated are not material parts but higher concepts.

206C. SOCR. Indeed we might, I think, find other arguments to prove that point. But we must not allow them to distract our attention from the question before us, namely, what can really be meant by saying that an account added to true belief yields knowledge in its most perfect form.

[1] The appeal to music and (earlier) to numbers and measures lends no support to Campbell's suggestion that the theory is due to 'some Pythagorean' (p. xxxix). These examples are brought forward, not by the author of the theory, but by Socrates in refuting it.

206c. THEAET. Yes, we must see what that means.
SOCR. Well then, what is this term 'account' intended to convey to us? I think it must mean one of three things.
THEAET. What are they?
D. SOCR. The first will be giving overt expression to one's thought by means of vocal sound with names and verbs, casting an image of one's notion on the stream that flows through the lips, like a reflection in a mirror or in water. Do you agree that expression of that sort is an 'account'?
THEAET. I do. We certainly call that expressing ourselves in speech (*λέγειν*).
SOCR. On the other hand, that is a thing that anyone can do more or less readily. If a man is not born deaf or dumb, he can signify what he thinks on any subject. So in this sense anyone whatever who has a correct
E. notion evidently will have it 'with an account', and there will be no place left anywhere for a correct notion apart from knowledge.
THEAET. True.

Logos here does not mean a 'verbal definition' such as a dictionary gives, but simply 'statement', 'speech'—the utterance of the notion or judgment in our minds. This common meaning of the word is mentioned only for the sake of clearness. It is obviously not what Theaetetus intended.

206E–208B. (2) *Enumeration of elementary parts. This will not convert a true notion into knowledge*

The second meaning is the enumeration of elementary parts. This is now considered on its own merits, apart from the further feature which proved fatal to the earlier theory, namely, the doctrine that an element must be unknowable.

206E. SOCR. Then we must not be too ready to charge the author of the definition of knowledge now before us [1] with talking nonsense. Perhaps that is not what he meant. He may have meant: being able to reply to the question,
207. what any given thing is, by enumerating its elements.
THEAET. For example, Socrates?
SOCR. For example, Hesiod says about a wagon, 'In a wagon are a hundred pieces of wood.' I could not name

[1] The author of the definition originally quoted by Theaetetus (201D), who is now regarded as not responsible for the doctrine, in the theory 'dreamt' by Socrates, that elements are unknowable.

207. them all; no more, I imagine, could you. If we were asked what a wagon is, we should be content if we could mention wheels, axle, body, rails, yoke.

THEAET. Certainly.

SOCR. But I dare say he would think us just as ridiculous as if we replied to the question about your own name by
B. telling the syllables. We might think and express ourselves correctly, but we should be absurd if we fancied ourselves to be grammarians and able to give such an account of the name Theaetetus as a grammarian would offer. He would say it is impossible to give a scientific account of anything, short of adding to your true notion a complete catalogue of the elements, as, I think, was said earlier.

THEAET. Yes, it was.

SOCR. In the same way, he would say, we may have a correct notion of the wagon, but the man who can give a complete statement of its nature by going through those
C. hundred parts has thereby added an account to his correct notion and, in place of mere belief, has arrived at a technical knowledge of the wagon's nature, by going through all the elements in the whole.

THEAET. Don't you approve, Socrates?

SOCR. Tell me if you approve, my friend, and whether you accept the view that the complete enumeration of elements is an account of any given thing, whereas description in terms of syllables or of any larger unit still leaves it un-
D. accounted for. Then we can look into the matter further.

THEAET. Well, I do accept that.

SOCR. Do you think, then, that anyone has knowledge of whatever it may be, when he thinks that one and the same thing is a part sometimes of one thing, sometimes of a different thing; or again when he believes now one and now another thing to be part of one and the same thing?

THEAET. Certainly not.

SOCR. Have you forgotten, then, that when you first began learning to read and write, that was what you and your schoolfellows did?

THEAET. Do you mean, when we thought that now one
E. letter and now another was part of the same syllable, and when we put the same letter sometimes into the proper syllable, sometimes into another?

SOCR. That is what I mean.

THEAET. Then I have certainly not forgotten; and I do

207E. not think that one has reached knowledge so long as one is in that condition.

SOCR. Well then, if at that stage you are writing 'Theaetetus' and you think you ought to write T and H and E and do so, and again when you are trying to write 'Theo-
208. dorus', you think you ought to write T and E and do so, can we say that you know the first syllable of your two names?

THEAET. No; we have just agreed that one has not knowledge so long as one is in that condition.

SOCR. And there is no reason why a person should not be in the same condition with respect to the second, third, and fourth syllables as well?

THEAET. None whatever.

SOCR. Can we, then, say that whenever in writing 'Theaetetus' he puts down all the letters in order, then he is in possession of the complete catalogue of elements together with correct belief?

THEAET. Obviously.

B. SOCR. Being still, as we agree, without knowledge, though his beliefs are correct?

THEAET. Yes.

SOCR. Although he possesses the 'account' in addition to right belief. For when he wrote he was in possession of the catalogue of the elements, which we agreed was the 'account'.

THEAET. True.

SOCR. So, my friend, there is such a thing as right belief together with an account, which is not yet entitled to be called knowledge.

THEAET. I am afraid so.

SOCR. Then, apparently, our idea that we had found the perfectly true definition of knowledge was no better than a golden dream.

Socrates has now disposed of the theory that the addition of a complete enumeration of elements to a correct, but previously unanalysed, notion of a complex thing will convert true belief into knowledge. Even if we reject the doctrine that the element is unknowable, and suppose it to be at least as knowable as the complex, still the complete enumeration may fail to give us anything better than true belief. The analysis, though it be carried as far as possible, will not yield knowledge of any different kind from the true notion we started with, or the correct beliefs about

the parts of a wagon which stopped short at five parts instead of all the hundred. So the schoolboy may have a correct belief about every letter in the name 'Theaetetus' and write it correctly, without having that assured knowledge which would save him from writing it incorrectly on another occasion.

If we go behind the illustration and beyond the limits of the theory that is being criticised, we see further into Plato's mind. In the *Meno* the slave who is ignorant of geometry is led through a problem till he reaches the correct solution. But Socrates points out that he still has only true belief, not knowledge, because he does not understand the proof or see how the conclusion necessarily follows from the premisses. Even if he were taken back through the earlier propositions, axioms, and definitions to the primitive indefinables, he might still possess no more than an exhaustive catalogue of true beliefs leading to the solution. He will not know even this much of geometry until he has grasped the necessary connexion which will make all these beliefs abiding and unshakable. All this, however, lies outside the presuppositions of the theory under examination, which contemplates only the analysis of a concrete thing into elementary parts.

208B–210B. (3) *The statement of a distinguishing mark. This will not convert a true notion into knowledge*

Socrates now suggests a third possible meaning of *logos*—'being able to state some mark by which the thing in question differs from everything else'. Will this addition convert true belief into knowledge? *Logos* will now mean the 'account' of a thing given by a description which serves to distinguish the thing we wish to indicate from all other things.

208B. SOCR. (*continues*). Or shall we not condemn the theory
C. yet? Perhaps the meaning to be given to 'account' is not this, but the remaining one of the three, one of which we said must be intended by anyone who defines knowledge as correct belief together with an account.

THEAET. A good reminder; there is still one meaning left. The first was what might be called the image of thought in spoken sound; and the one we have just discussed was going all through the elements to arrive at the whole. What is the third?

SOCR. The meaning most people would give: being able to name some mark by which the thing one is asked about differs from everything else.

THEAET. Could you give me an example of such an account of a thing?

208D. SOCR. Take the sun as an example. I dare say you will be satisfied with the account of it as the brightest of the heavenly bodies that go round the earth.

THEAET. Certainly.

SOCR. Let me explain the point of this example. It is to illustrate what we were just saying: that if you get hold of the difference distinguishing any given thing from all others, then, so some people say, you will have an 'account' of it; whereas, so long as you fix upon something common to other things, your account will embrace all the things that share it.

E. THEAET. I understand. I agree that what you describe may fairly be called an 'account'.

SOCR. And if, besides a right notion about a thing, whatever it may be, you also grasp its difference from all other things, you will have arrived at knowledge of what, till then, you had only a notion of.

THEAET. We do say that, certainly.

SOCR. Really, Theaetetus, now I come to look at this statement at close quarters, it is like a scene-painting: I cannot make it out at all, though, so long as I kept at a distance, there seemed to be some sense in it.

THEAET. What do you mean? Why so?

209. SOCR. I will explain, if I can. Suppose I have a correct notion about you; if I add to that the account of you, then, we are to understand, I know you. Otherwise I have only a notion.

THEAET. Yes.

SOCR. And 'account' means putting your differentness [1] into words.

THEAET. Yes.

SOCR. So, at the time when I had only a notion, my mind did not grasp any of the points in which you differ from others?

THEAET. Apparently not.

SOCR. Then I must have had before my mind one of those common things which belong to another person as much as to you.

B. THEAET. That follows.

SOCR. But look here! If that was so, how could I possibly

[1] Plato seems deliberately to avoid the term διαφορά here and henceforward (though it occurred at 208D), perhaps because of its technical use for the *differentia* of a species, which is irrelevant to this context. Διαφορότης is a Platonic word which occurs again at *Rep.* 587E.

209B. be having a notion of you rather than of anyone else? Suppose I was thinking: Theaetetus is one who is a man and has a nose and eyes and a mouth and so forth, enumerating every part of the body. Will thinking in that way result in my thinking of Theaetetus rather than of Theodorus or, as they say, of the man in the street?

THEAET. How should it?

SOCR. Well, now suppose I think not merely of a man

C. with a nose and eyes, but of one with a snub nose and prominent eyes, once more shall I be having a notion of you any more than of myself or anyone else of that description?

THEAET. No.

SOCR. In fact, there will be no notion of Theaetetus in my mind, I suppose, until this particular snubness has stamped and registered within me a record distinct from all the other cases of snubness that I have seen; and so with every other part of you. Then, if I meet you tomorrow, that trait will revive my memory and give me a correct notion about you.

THEAET. Quite true.

D. SOCR. If that is so, the correct notion of anything must itself include the differentness of that thing.

THEAET. Evidently.

SOCR. Then what meaning is left for getting hold of an 'account' in addition to the correct notion? If, on the one hand, it means adding the notion of how a thing differs from other things, such an injunction is simply absurd.

THEAET. How so?

SOCR. When we have a correct notion of the way in which certain things differ from other things, it tells us to add a correct notion of the way in which they differ from other

E. things. On this showing, the most vicious of circles would be nothing to this injunction. It might better deserve to be called the sort of direction a blind man might give: to tell us to get hold of something we already have, in order to get to know something we are already thinking of, suggests a state of the most absolute darkness.

THEAET. Whereas, if ——? The supposition you made just now implied that you would state some alternative; what was it? [1]

[1] Reading εἰ δέ γε — τί νυνδὴ ὡς ἐρῶν <ἕτι> ὑπέθου; The objection to reading (with Burnet and others) εἰπὲ δὴ τί νυνδὴ ὡς ἐρῶν ἐπύθου is that Socrates' last question (τὸ οὖν προσλαβεῖν . . . εἴη; 209D, 4) did not suggest that he had

209E. SOCR. If the direction to add an 'account' means that we are to get to *know* the differentness, as opposed to merely having a notion of it, this most admirable of all definitions of knowledge will be a pretty business; because
210. 'getting to know' means acquiring knowledge, doesn't it?
THEAET. Yes.
SOCR. So, apparently, to the question, What is knowledge? our definition will reply: 'Correct belief together with knowledge of a differentness'; for, according to it, 'adding an account' will come to that.
THEAET. So it seems.
SOCR. Yes; and when we are inquiring after the nature of knowledge, nothing could be sillier than to say that it is correct belief together with a *knowledge* of differentness or of anything whatever.
So, Theaetetus, neither perception, nor true belief, nor
B. the addition of an 'account' to true belief can be knowledge.
THEAET. Apparently not.

Some critics have imagined that the above argument is concerned with the definition of species by genus and specific difference, and even that Plato is here criticising himself. But it is clearly presumed throughout that the object to be defined and known is a concrete individual thing—'ourselves and other things', Hesiod's wagon, a person (Theaetetus), the sun. The 'differentness' is a perceptible individual peculiarity, such as 'this particular snubness which I have seen', distinguishing this individual person from other individuals, not a specific difference distinguishing a species from other species and common to all individuals of the species.

something more to say. What did suggest this was the *εἰ μὲν* (209D, 5), implying that an alternative supposition (*εἰ δὲ*) was to follow—the supposition stated in Socrates' next speech (*εἰ τὸ λόγον . . .* 209E, 6). Badham saw this and tried to restore the necessary sense to Theaetetus' inquiry by reading *εἰ δέ γε—τί νυνδὴ ὡς ἕτερον ὑπέθου;* 'Whereas if—what was it you suggested just now as the alternative?' The sense is better, if it could be got out of the words. But (as Campbell noted) *ὑποτίθεσθαι*, though it can mean to *put* an explicit suggestion *to* a person, cannot mean to *imply* something not stated at all; and the imperfect would be required.

The reading I propose (*Class. Rev.* xliv (1930), 114) means: 'Whereas if—what was it (the "whereas if") that your supposition just now ("if on the one hand") implied (*ὡς*) that you were going on to state?' For *εἰπεῖν ἔτι*, cf. Soph., *O.T.* 748, *δείξεις δὲ μᾶλλον, ἢν ἔν ἐξείπῃς ἔτι.*

The rather obscure form of the question is (like the rest of these concluding pages) in the manner of the *Sophist*; *e.g.* 217A, *τί δὲ μάλιστα καὶ τὸ ποῖόν τι περὶ αὐτῶν διαπορηθεὶς ἐρέσθαι διενοήθης;* 226C, *τὸ ποῖον αὐτῶν πέρι βουληθεὶς δηλῶσαι παραδείγματα προθεὶς ταῦτα κατὰ πάντων ἤρου;*

Socrates argues: Suppose I have a correct notion of Theaetetus. If my notion contains only traits he shares with all or some other men, then it is not a notion of him any more than of them. It must include his individual and peculiar characteristics. Thus my notion of his individual 'differentness' is already included in my notion of just that person, and I am acquainted with that differentness in just the same way as I am with his common characteristics. It is absurd to tell me to add it to my notion of the person as a whole or to suppose that such an addition could convert a correct notion into some higher kind of cognition called 'knowledge'.

The instance of the sun recalls Aristotle's argument that it is impossible to define an individual sensible substance.[1] A definition must consist of words whose established meanings can all apply to other actual or possible individuals. Even if you take an eternal substance which is in fact unique, such as the sun or moon, it is still impossible to define it. Some attributes of the sun (going round the earth, invisible at night) might be removed, and yet the sun would still be the sun. Any description such as 'the brightest of the heavenly bodies' must consist of attributes that might belong to another subject. There can, at any time, be only one body which is 'the brightest', but if a brighter body should appear in the heavens, the description would transfer itself to that.

There is no question here of the definition of species, which are definable precisely because no two species are conceptually identical, as any number of individuals may be. The whole discussion is confined to the level of the theory 'dreamt' by Socrates, which contemplates only our acquaintance with individual sensible things. The point is that we cannot get 'knowledge', supposed to be somehow superior to mere beliefs or notions, by adding a *logos* in any of the senses considered. These senses appear to exhaust the possible ways in which an 'account' can be given of an individual thing. (1) We may name it (express our notion of it in speech); (2) we may enumerate the material parts of which it is composed; or (3) we may point it out by a description which will serve to distinguish the thing we indicate from other things. But none of these 'accounts' will yield any 'clearer' or more certain kind of cognition than we started with.

The Platonist will draw the necessary inference. True knowledge has for its object things of a different order—not sensible things, but intelligible Forms and truths about them. Such objects are necessarily unique; they do not become and perish or change

[1] *Metaph.* z, 15. Aristotle took the example of the Sun from our passage and evidently understood Plato's meaning correctly.

in any respect. Hence we can know them and eternal truths about them. The *Theaetetus* leads to this old conclusion by demonstrating the failure of all attempts to extract knowledge from sensible objects.

210B–D. *Epilogue. All these attempts to define knowledge have failed.*

It only remains to point out that all these attempts have failed and no others are forthcoming.

210B. SOCR. Are we in labour, then, with any further child, my friend, or have we brought to birth all we have to say about knowledge?

THEAET. Indeed we have; and for my part I have already, thanks to you, given utterance to more than I had in me.

SOCR. All of which our midwife's skill pronounces to be mere wind-eggs and not worth the rearing?

THEAET. Undoubtedly.

SOCR. Then supposing you should ever henceforth try to
C. conceive afresh, Theaetetus, if you succeed, your embryo thoughts will be the better as a consequence of to-day's scrutiny; and if you remain barren, you will be gentler and more agreeable to your companions, having the good sense not to fancy you know what you do not know. For that, and no more, is all that my art can effect; nor have I any of that knowledge possessed by all the great and admirable men of our own day or of the past. But this midwife's art is a gift from heaven; my mother had it for women,
D. and I for young men of a generous spirit and for all in whom beauty dwells.[1]

Now I must go to the portico of the King Archon to meet the indictment which Meletus has drawn up against me. But to-morrow morning, Theodorus, let us meet here again.

[1] *καλοί* refers to beauty of mind, such as Theaetetus has, rather than bodily beauty. Cf. 185E.

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